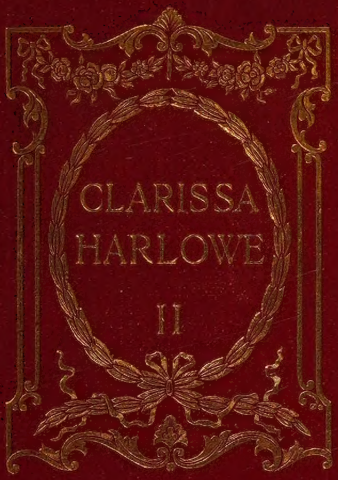
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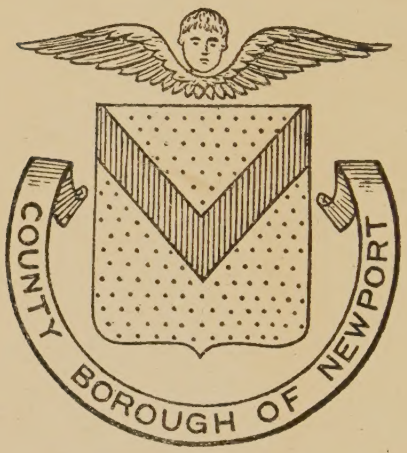

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THE NOVELS OF SAMUEL RICHARDSON IN TWENTY VOLUMES. WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ETHEL M. M. McKENNA - VOL. VI

CLARISSA HARLOWE

VOLUME II

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I heard my brother and sister, and that Solmes laughing.

CLARISSA HARLOWE; OR THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY. By Samuel Richardson. With thirty-four illustrations reproduced from the engravings by Thomas Stothard.

In Nine Volumes · Volume II

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, LD.
1902

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THE HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE

LETTER I

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

My heart fluttered with the hope and the fear of seeing my mother, and with the shame and the grief of having given her so much uneasiness. But it needed not: she was not permitted to come. But my aunt was so good as to return, yet not without my sister; and, taking my hand, made me sit down by her.

She came, she must own, *officiously*, she said, this *once* more, though against the opinion of my father: but knowing and dreading the consequence of my opposition, she could not *but* come.

She then set forth to me my friends' expectations from me; Mr. Solmes's riches (three times as rich he came out to be, as any body had thought him); the settlements proposed; Mr. Lovelace's bad character; their aversion to him; all in a very strong light; but not in a stronger than my mother had before placed them in. My mother, surely, could not have given the particulars of what had passed between herself and

me: if she had, my aunt would not have repeated many of the same sentiments, as you will find she did, that had been still more strongly urged, without effect by her venerable sister.

She said it would break the heart of my father to have it imagined that he had not a power over his child; and that, as *he* thought, for my own good: a child too, whom they had always doated upon!—Dearest, dearest Miss, concluded she, clasping her fingers, with the most condescending earnestness, let me beg of you, for *my* sake, for *your own* sake, for a *hundred* sakes, to get over this averseness, to give up your prejudices, and make every one happy and easy once more.—I would kneel to you, my dearest Niece—nay, I *will* kneel to you!—

And down she dropt, and I with her, kneeling to her, and beseeching her not to kneel; clasping my arms about her, and bathing her worthy bosom with my tears.

O rise! rise! my beloved Aunt, said I: you cut me to the heart with this condescending goodness.

Say then, my dearest Niece, say then, that you will oblige all your friends!—If you love us, I *beseech* you do—

How can I promise what I can sooner choose to die than to perform!—

Say then, my dear, you will *consider* of it. Say you will but *reason* with yourself. Give us but hopes. Don't let me entreat, and *thus* entreat, in vain—[for still she kneeled, and I by her].

What a hard case is mine!—Could I but *doubt*, I know I could *conquer*.—That which is an inducement to my friends, is none at all to me—How often, my dearest Aunt, must I repeat the same thing?—Let me but be single—Cannot I live single? Let me be sent, as I have proposed, to Scotland, to Florence, any

where: let me be sent a slave to the Indies, any where —any of these I will consent to. But I cannot, *cannot* think of giving my vows to a man I cannot endure!

Well then, rising, (Bella silently, with uplifted hands, reproaching my supposed perverseness,) I see nothing can prevail with you to oblige us.

What *can* I do, my dearest Aunt Hervey? What *can* I do? Were I capable of giving a hope I meant not to enlarge, then could I say, I would *consider* of your kind advice. But I would rathe be thought *perverse* than *insincere*. Is there, however, no *medium?* Can *nothing* be thought of? Will nothing do, but to have a man who is the *more* disgustful to me, because he is unjust in the very articles he offers?

Whom now, Clary, said my sister, do you reflect upon? Consider that.

Make not invidious applications of what I say, Bella. It may not be looked upon in the same light by every one. The *giver* and the *accepter* are principally answerable in an unjust donation. While I think of it in this light, I should be inexcusable to be the latter. But why do I enter upon a *supposition* of this nature?—My heart, as I have often, *often* said, recoils, at the *thoughts* of the man, in every light.—Whose father, but mine, agrees upon articles where there is no prospect of a liking? Where the direct contrary is avowed, all along avowed, without the least variation, or *shadow* of a change of sentiment?—But it is not my father's doing originally. O my cruel, cruel brother, to cause a measure to be forced upon me, which he would not behave tolerably under, were the like to be offered to him!

The girl is got into her altitudes, Aunt Hervey, said my sister. You see, Madam, she spares nobody. Be pleased to let her know what she has to trust to. Nothing is to be done with her. Pray, Madam, pronounce her doom.

My aunt retired to the window, weeping, with my sister in her hand: I cannot, indeed I cannot, Miss Harlowe, said she, softly, (but yet I heard every word she said): there is great hardship in her case. She is a noble child after all. What pity things are gone so far!—But Mr. Solmes ought to be told to desist.

O Madam, said my sister, in a kind of loud whisper, are *you* caught too by the little siren?—My mother did well not to come up!—I question whether my father himself, after his first indignation, would not be turned round by her. Nobody but my brother can do any thing with her, I am sure.

Don't think of your brother's coming up, said my aunt, still in a low voice—He is too furious. I see no obstinacy, no perverseness, in her manner! If your brother comes, I will not be answerable for the consequences: for I thought twice or thrice she would have gone into fits.

O Madam, she has a strong heart!—And you see there is no prevailing with her, though you were upon your knees to her.

My sister left my aunt musing at the window, with her back towards us, and took that opportunity to insult me still more barbarously; for, stepping to my closet, she took up the patterns which my mother had sent me up, and bringing them to me, she spread them upon the chair by me; and offering one, and then another, upon her sleeve and shoulder, thus she ran on, with great seeming tranquillity, but whisperingly, that my aunt might not hear her. *This*, Clary, is a pretty pattern enough: but *this* is quite *charming!* I would advise you to make your appearance in it. And *this*, were I you, should be my wedding night-gown—And *this* my second dressed suit! Won't you give orders, love, to have your grandmother's jewels new set?—Or will you think to shew away in the new ones Mr.

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Solmes intends to present to you? He talks of laying out two or three thousand pounds in presents, child! Dear heart!—How gorgeously will you be array'd! What! silent, my dear? Mamma Norton's *sweet dear!* What! silent still?—But, Clary, won't you have a velvet suit? It would cut a great figure in a country church, you know: and the weather may bear it for a month yet to come. Crimson velvet, suppose! Such a fine complexion as yours, how it would be set off by it! What an agreeable blush would it give you!—Heigh-ho! (mocking me, for I sighed to be thus fooled with,) and do you sigh, love?—Well then, as it will be a solemn wedding, what think you of *black* velvet, child?—Silent still, Clary?—Black velvet, so fair as you are, with those charming eyes, gleaming through a wintry cloud, like an April sun!—Does not Lovelace tell you they are charming eyes?—How lovely will you appear to every one!—What! silent still, love?—But about your laces, Clary?—

She would have gone on still further, had not my aunt advanced towards us, wiping her eyes—What! whispering, ladies! You seem so easy and so pleased, Miss Harlowe, with your private conference, that I hope I shall carry down good news.

I am only giving her my opinion of her patterns, *here*.—Unasked indeed; but she seems, by her silence, to approve of my judgment.

O Bella! said I, that Mr. Lovelace had not taken you at your word!—You had before now been exercising your judgment on your own account: and *I* had been happy, as well as *you!* Was it my fault, I pray you, that it was not so?—

O how she raved!

To be so ready to *give*, Bella, and so loth to *take*, is not very fair in you.

The poor Bella descended to call names.

Why, Sister, said I, you are as angry, as if there were more in the hint than possibly might be designed. My wish is sincere, for both our sakes !—for the whole family's sake !—And what (good now) is there in it ? —Do not, do not, dear Bella, give me cause to suspect, that I have found a reason for your behaviour to me, and which till now was wholly unaccountable from sister to sister—

Fie, fie, Clary ! said my aunt.

My sister was more and more outrageous.

O how much fitter, said I, to be a *jest*, than a *jester !*—But now, Bella, turn the glass to you, and see how poorly sits the robe upon your own shoulders, which you have been so unmercifully fixing upon mine !

Fie, fie, Miss Clary ! repeated my aunt.

And fie, fie, likewise, good Madam, to Miss Harlowe, you would say, were you to have heard her barbarous insults !

Let us go, Madam, said my sister, with great violence ; let us leave the creature to swell till she bursts with her own poison.—The last time I will ever come near her, in the mind I am in !

It is so easy a thing, returned I, were I to be mean enough to follow an example that is so censurable in the setter of it, to vanquish such a teasing spirit as your's with its own blunt weapons, that I am amazed you will provoke me !—Yet, Bella, since you *will* go, (for she had hurried to the door,) forgive me. I forgive you. And you have a double reason to do so, both from eldership and from the offence so studiously given to one in affliction. But may *you* be happy, though *I* never shall ! May *you* never have half the trials *I* have had ! Be *this* your comfort, that you cannot have a sister to treat *you* as you have treated *me !*—And so God bless you !

O thou art a—And down she flung without saying what.

Permit me, Madam, said I to my aunt, sinking down, and clasping her knees with my arms, to detain you one moment—not to say any thing about my poor sister—she is her own punisher—only to thank you for all your condescending goodness to me. I only beg of you not to impute to obstinacy the immovableness I have shown to so tender a friend; and to forgive me every thing I have said or done amiss in your presence, for it has not proceeded from inward rancour to the poor Bella. But I will be bold to say, that neither she, nor my brother, nor even my father himself, knows what a heart they have set a bleeding.

I saw, to my comfort, what effect my sister's absence wrought for me.—Rise, my noble-minded Niece!—Charming creature! [those were her kind words] kneel not to me!—Keep to yourself what I now say to you.—I admire you more than I can express—and if you can forbear claiming your estate, and can resolve to avoid Lovelace, you will continue to be the greatest miracle I ever knew at your years—but I must hasten down after your sister.—These are my last words to you: 'Conform to your father's will, if you possibly can. How meritorious will it be in you to do so! Pray to God to *enable* you to conform. You don't know what may be done.'

Only, my dear Aunt, one word, *one* word more (for she was going)—Speak all you can for my dear Mrs. Norton. She is but low in the world: should ill health overtake her, she may not know how to live without my mamma's favour. I shall have no means to help her; for I will want necessaries before I will assert my right: and I do assure you, she has said so many things to me in behalf of my submitting to my father's will, that her arguments have not a little con-

tributed to make me resolve to avoid the extremities, which nevertheless I pray to God they do not at last force me upon. And yet they deprive me of her advice, and think unjustly of one of the most excellent of women.

I am glad to hear you say this: and take *this*, and *this*, and *this*, my charming Niece! (for so she called me almost at every word, kissing me earnestly, and clasping her arms about my neck:) and God protect you, and direct you! But you *must* submit: indeed you *must*. Some *one day* in a month from *this* is all the choice that is left you.

And this, I suppose, was the doom my sister called for; and yet not worse than what had been pronounced upon me before.

She repeated these last sentences louder than the former. 'And remember, Miss,' added she, 'it is your *duty* to comply.'—And down she went, leaving me with my heart full, and my eyes running over.

The very repetition of this fills me with almost equal concern to that which I felt at the time.

I must lay down my pen. Mistinesses, which give to my deluged eye the appearance of all the colours in the rainbow, will not permit me to write on.

Wednesday, Five o'clock.

I will now add a few lines—My aunt, as she went down from me, was met at the foot of the stairs by my sister, who seemed to think she had staid a good while after her; and hearing her last words prescribing to me implicit duty, praised her for it, and exclaimed against my obstinacy. Did you ever hear of such perverseness, Madam? said she: Could you have thought that *your* Clarissa, and *every body*'s Clarissa, was such a girl?—And who, as *you* said, *is* to submit, her *father* or *she?*

My aunt said something in answer to her, compassionating me, as I thought, by her accent: but I heard not the words.

Such a strange perseverance in a measure so unreasonable!—But my brother and sister are continually misrepresenting all I say and do; and I am deprived of the opportunity of defending myself!—My sister says,* that had they thought me such a championess, they would not have engaged with me: and now, not knowing how to reconcile my supposed obstinacy with my general character and natural temper, they seem to hope to tire me out, and resolve to vary their measures accordingly. My brother, you see,† is determined to carry this point, or to abandon Harlowe-place, and never to see it more. So they are to lose a son, or to conquer a daughter—the perversest and most ungrateful that ever parents had!—This is the light he places things in: and has undertaken, it seems, to subdue me, if *his* advice be followed. It will be *farther* tried; of *that* I am convinced; and what will be their next measure, who can divine?

I shall dispatch, with this, my answer to your's of Sunday last, begun on Monday;‡ but which is not yet quite finished. It is too long to copy: I have not time for it. In it I have been very free with you, my dear, in more places than one. I cannot say that I am pleased with all I have written—yet will not now alter it. My mind is not at ease enough for the subject. Don't be angry with me. Yet, if you can excuse one or two passages, it will be because they were written by

Your
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

* See Letter XLII. of Vol. I. † Ibid.
‡ See Letter XL. ibid.

LETTER II

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Wednesday Night, March 22.

ANGRY!—What should I be angry for? I am mightily pleased with your freedom, as you call it. I only wonder at your patience with me; that's all. I am sorry I gave you the trouble of so long a letter upon the occasion,* notwithstanding the pleasure I received in reading it.

I believe you did *not* intend reserves to me: for two reasons I believe you did not: First, because you *say* you did not: Next, because you have not *as yet* been able to convince *yourself* how it is to be with you; and persecuted as you are, how so to separate the effects that spring from the two causes [*persecution* and *love*] as to give to each its particular due. But this I believe I hinted to you once before; and so will say no more upon this subject at present.

Robin says, you had but just deposited your last parcel when he took it: for he was there but half an hour before, and found nothing. He had seen my impatience, and loitered about, being willing to bring me something from you, if possible.

My cousin Jenny Fynnett is here, and desires to be my bedfellow to-night. So I shall not have an opportunity to sit down with that seriousness and attention which the subjects of yours require. For she is all prate, you know, and loves to set *me* a prating; yet comes upon a very grave occasion—to procure my mother to go with her to her grandmother Larking, who has been long bed-ridden; and at last has taken

* See Vol. I. Letter XXXVII. for the occasion; and Letters XXXVIII. and XL. of the same volume, for the freedom Clarissa apologizes for.

it into her head that she is mortal, and therefore will make her will; a work she was till now extremely averse to; but it must be upon condition that my mother, who is her distant relation, will go to her, and advise her as to the particulars of it: for she has a high opinion, as every one else has, of my mother's judgment in all matters relating to wills, settlements, and such-like notable affairs.

Mrs. Larking lives about seventeen miles off; and as my mother cannot endure to lie out of her own house, she proposes to set out early in the morning, that she might be able to get back again at night. So, to-morrow I shall be at your devotion from day-light to day-light; nor will I be at home to any body.

As to the impertinent man, I have put him upon escorting the two ladies, in order to attend my mother home at night. Such expeditions as these, and to give us women a little air of vanity and assuredness at public places, is all that I know these dangling fellows are good for.

I have hinted before, that I could almost wish my mother and Mr. Hickman would make a match of it: and I here repeat my wishes. What signifies a difference of fifteen or twenty years; especially when the lady has spirits that will make her young a long time, and the lover is a *mighty* sober man?—I think, verily, I could like him better for a papa, than for a nearer relation: and they are *strange* admirers of one another.

But allow me a perhaps still better (and, as to *years*, more suitable and happier) disposal; for the *man* at least.—What think you, my dear, of compromising with your friends, by rejecting *both* your men, and encouraging my parader?—If your liking one of the two go no farther than *conditional*, I believe it will do. A rich thought, if it obtain your approbation! In this light, I should have a prodigious respect for Mr.

Hickman; more by half than I can have in the other. The vein is opened — Shall I let it flow? How difficult to withstand constitutional foibles!

Hickman is certainly a man more in your taste than any of those who have hitherto been brought to address you. He is mighty sober, mighty grave, and all that. Then you have told me, that he is your favourite. But that is because he is my mother's perhaps. The man would certainly rejoice at the transfer; or he must be a greater fool than I take him to be.

O but your fierce lover would knock him o' the head —I forgot that!—What makes me incapable of seriousness when I write about this Hickman?—Yet the man so good a sort of a man in the main!—But who is perfect? This is one of my foibles: and it is something for you to chide me for.

You believe me to be very happy in my prospects in relation to him: because you are so very unhappy in the foolish usage you meet with, you are apt (as I suspect) to think *that* tolerable which otherwise would be far from being so. I dare say, you would not, with all your grave airs, like him for yourself; except, being addressed by Solmes and him, you were obliged to have one of them.—I have given you a test. Let me see what you will say to it.

For my own part, I confess to you, that I have great exceptions to Hickman. *He* and *wedlock* never yet once entered into my head at one time. Shall I give you my free thoughts of him?—Of his *best* and his *worst*; and that as if I were writing to one who knows him not?—I think I will. Yet it is impossible I should do it gravely. The subject won't bear to be so treated in my opinion. We are not come so far as that yet, if ever we shall: and to do it in another strain, ill becomes my present real concern for you.

Here I was interrupted on the honest man's account. He has been here these two hours—courting the mother for the daughter, I suppose—yet she wants no courting neither : 'Tis well one of us does ; else the man would have nothing but halcyon ; and be remiss, and saucy of course.

He was going. His horses at the door. My mother sent for me down, pretending to want to say something to me.

Something she said when I came that signified nothing—Evidently, for no reason called me, but to give me an opportunity to see what a fine bow her man could make ; and that she might wish me a good night. She knows I am not over ready to oblige him with my company, if I happen to be otherwise engaged. I could not help an air a little upon the fretful, when I found she had nothing of moment to say to me, and when I saw her intention.

She smiled off the visible fretfulness, that the man might go away in good humour with himself.

He bowed to the ground, and would have taken my hand, his whip in the other. I did not like to be so companioned : I withdrew my hand, but touched his elbow with a motion, as if from his low bow I had supposed him falling, and would have helped him up—A sad slip, it might have been ! said I.

A mad girl ! smiled it off my mother.

He was put quite out ; took his horse-bridle, stumped back, back, back, bowing, till he run against his servant. I laughed. He mounted his horse. I mounted up stairs, after a little lecture ; and my head is so filled with him, that I must resume my intention, in hopes to divert you for a few moments.

Take it then—his *best*, and his *worst*, as I said before.

Hickman is a sort of fiddling, busy, yet, to borrow a

word from you, *unbusy* man: has a great deal to do, and seems to me to dispatch nothing. Irresolute and changeable in every thing, but in teasing me with his nonsense; which yet, it is evident, he must continue upon my mother's interest more than upon his own hopes; for none have I given him.

Then I have a quarrel against his face, though in his person, for a well-thriven man, tolerably genteel—Not to his features so much neither; for what, as you have often observed, are features in a man?—But Hickman, with strong lines, and big cheek and chin bones, has not the manliness in his aspect, which Lovelace has with the most regular and agreeable features.

Then what a set and formal mortal he is in some things!—I have not been able yet to laugh him out of his long bid and beads. Indeed, that is, because my mother thinks they become him; and I would not be so free with him, as to own I should *choose* to have him leave it off. If he did, so particular is the man, he would certainly, if left to himself, fall into a King-William's cravat, or some such antique chin-cushion, as by the pictures of that prince one sees was then the fashion.

As to his dress in general, he cannot indeed be called a sloven, but sometimes he is too gaudy, at other times too plain, to be uniformly elegant. And for his manners, he makes such a bustle with them, and about them, as would induce one to suspect that they are more strangers than familiars to him. You, I know, lay this to his fearfulness of disobliging or offending. Indeed your *over-doers* generally give the offence they endeavour to avoid.

The man however is honest: is of family: has a clear and good estate; and may one day be a baronet, an't please you. He is humane and benevolent, tolerably generous, as people say; and as *I* might say too,

if I would accept of his bribes; which he offers in hopes of having them all back again, and the *bribed* into the bargain. A method taken by all corrupters, from old Satan, to the lowest of his servants. Yet, to speak in the language of a person I am bound to honour, he is deemed a *prudent* man; that is to say a *good manager*.

Then I cannot but confess, that now I like not anybody better, whatever I did once.

He is no fox-hunter: he keeps a pack indeed; but prefers not his hounds to his fellow-creatures. No bad sign for a wife, I own. He loves his horse; but dislikes racing in a gaming way, as well as all sorts of gaming. Then he is sober; modest; they *say*, virtuous; in short, has qualities that mothers would be fond of in a husband for their daughters; and for which perhaps their daughters would be the happier could they judge as well for themselves, as experience possibly may teach *them* to judge for their *future* daughters.

Nevertheless, to own the truth, I cannot say I love the man: nor, I believe, ever shall.

Strange! that these sober fellows cannot have a decent sprightliness, a modest assurance with them! Something *debonnaire;* which need not be separated from that awe and reverence, when they address a woman, which should shew the ardour of their passion, rather then the sheepishness of their nature; for who knows not that love delights in taming the lion-hearted? That those of the sex, who are most conscious of their own defect in point of courage, naturally *require*, and therefore *as* naturally *prefer*, the man who has most of it, as the most able to give them the requisite protection? That the greater their own cowardice, as it would be called in a man, the greater is their delight in subjects of heroism? As may be observed in their reading; which turns upon difficulties encountered,

battles fought, and enemies overcome, four or five hundred by the prowess of one single hero, the *more* improbable the *better :* in short, that *their* man should be a hero to every one living but themselves ; and to them know no bound to his humility. A woman has some glory in subduing a heart no man living can appall ; and hence too often the bravo, assuming the hero, and making himself pass for one, succeeds as only a hero should.

But as for honest Hickman, the good man is so *generally* meek, as I imagine, that I know not whether I have any *preference* paid me in his obsequiousness. And then, when I rate him, he seems to be so naturally fitted for rebuke, and so much expects it, that I know not how to disappoint him, whether he just then deserve it, or not. I am sure, he has puzzled me many a time when I have seen him look penitent for faults he has not committed, whether to pity or laugh at him.

You and I have often *retrospected* the faces and minds of grown people ; that is to say, have formed images for their present appearances, outside and in, (as far as the manners of the persons would justify us in the latter) what sort of figures they made when boys and girls. And I'll tell you the lights in which Hickman, Solmes, and Lovelace, our three heroes, have appeared to me, supposing them boys at school.

Solmes I have imagined to be a little sordid, pilfering rogue, who would purloin from every body, and beg every body's bread and butter from him ; while, as I have heard a reptile brag, he would in a winter-morning spit upon his thumbs, and spread his own with it, that he might keep it all to himself.

Hickman, a great overgrown, lank-haired, chubby boy, who would be hunched and punched by every body ; and go home with his finger in his eye, and tell his mother.

While Lovelace I have supposed a curl-pated villain, full of fire, fancy, and mischief; an orchard-robber, a wall-climber, a horse-rider without saddle or bridle, neck or nothing: a sturdy rogue, in short, who would kick and cuff, and do no right, and take no wrong of any body; would get his head broke, then a plaster for it, or let it heal of itself; while he went on to do more mischief, and if not to get, to deserve, broken bones. And the same dispositions have grown up with them, and distinguish them as *men*, with no very material alteration.

Only that all men are monkeys more or less, or else that you and I should have such baboons as these to choose out of, is a mortifying thing, my dear.

I am sensible that I am a little out of season in treating thus ludicrously the subject I am upon, while you are so unhappy; and if my manner does not divert you, as my flightiness used to do, I am inexcusable both to you, and to my own heart: which, I do assure you, notwithstanding my seeming levity, is wholly in your case.

As this letter is extremely whimsical, I will not send it until I can accompany it with something more solid and better suited to your unhappy circumstances; that is to say, to the present subject of our correspondence. To-morrow, as I told you, will be wholly my own, and of consequence yours. Adieu, therefore, till then.

LETTER III

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Tuesday Morn. 7 o'Clock.

My mother and cousin are already gone off in our chariot and four, attended by their doughty 'squire on

horseback, and he by two of his own servants, and one of my mother's. They both love parade when they go abroad, at least in compliment to one another; which shews, that each *thinks* the other does. Robin is your servant and mine, and nobody's else—and the day is all my own.

I must begin with blaming you, my dear, for your resolution not to litigate for your right, if occasion were to be given you. Justice is due to ourselves, as well as to every body else. Still more must I blame you for declaring to your aunt and sister, that you will *not*: since (as they will tell it to your father and brother) the declaration must needs give advantage to spirits who have so little of that generosity for which you are so much distinguished.

There never was a spirit in the world that would insult where it *dared*, but it would creep and cringe where it dared *not*. Let me remind you of a sentence of your own, the occasion for which I have forgotten: 'That little spirits will always accommodate themselves to the temper of those they would work upon: will fawn upon a sturdy-tempered person: will insult the meek:' And another given to Miss Biddulph, upon an occasion you cannot forget:—'If we assume a dignity in what we say and do, and take care not to disgrace by arrogance our own assumption, every body will treat us with respect and deference.'

I remember that you once made an observation, which you said, you was obliged to Mrs. Norton for, and she to her father, upon an excellent preacher, who was but an indifferent liver: 'That to excel in theory, and to excel in practice, generally required different talents; which did not always meet in the same person.' Do you, my dear (to whom theory and practice are the same thing in almost every laudable quality), apply the observation to yourself, in this particular case, where

resolution is required; and where the performance of the will of the defunct is the question—no more to be dispensed with by *you*, in whose favour it was made, than by any body else who have only themselves in view by breaking through it.

I know how much you despise riches in the main: but yet it behoves you to remember, that in one instance you yourself have judged them valuable—'In that they put it into our power to *lay* obligations; while the want of that power puts a person under a necessity of receiving favours—receiving them perhaps from grudging and narrow spirits, who know not how to confer them with that grace, which gives the principal merit to a beneficent action.'—Reflect upon this, my dear, and see how it agrees with the declaration you have made to your aunt and sister, that you would not resume your estate, were you to be turned out of doors, and reduced to indigence and want. Their very fears that you *will* resume, point out to you the *necessity* of resuming upon the treatment you meet with.

I own, that (at first reading) I was much affected with your mother's letter sent with the patterns. A strange measure however from a mother; for *she* did not intend to insult you; and I cannot but lament that so sensible and so fine a woman should stoop to so much art as that letter is written with: and which also appears in some of the conversations you have given me an account of. See you not in her passiveness, what boisterous spirits can obtain from gentler, merely by teasing and ill-nature?

I know the pride they have always taken in calling you an Harlowe—*Clarissa Harlowe*, so *formal* and so *set*, at every word, when they are grave or proudly solemn.—Your mother has learnt it of them—and as in *marriage*, so in *will*, has been taught to bury her own superior name and family in theirs. I have often thought

that the same spirit governed them, in this piece of affectation, and others of the like nature (as *Harlowe*-Place, and so-forth, though not the elder brother's or paternal seat), as governed the tyrant Tudor,* who marrying Elizabeth, the heiress of the house of York, made himself a title to a throne, which he would not otherwise have had (being but a base descendant of the Lancaster line); and proved a gloomy and vile husband to her; for no other cause, than because she had laid him under obligations which his pride would not permit him to own.—Nor would the unprincely wretch marry her till he was in possession of the crown, that he might not be supposed to owe it to her claim.

You have chidden me, and again will, I doubt not, for the liberties I take with some of your relations. But my dear, need I tell *you*, that pride in *ourselves* must, and for ever will, provoke contempt, and bring down upon us abasement from *others*?—Have we not, in the case of a celebrated bard, observed, that those who aim at *more* than their due, will be refused the honours they may justly claim?—I am very loth to offend you; yet I cannot help speaking of your relations, as well as of others, as I think they deserve. *Praise* or *dispraise*, is the reward or punishment which the world confers or inflicts on *merit* or *demerit*; and, for my part, I neither can nor will confound them in the application. I despise them all, but your mother: indeed I do: and as for her—but I will spare the good lady for your sake—and one argument, indeed, I think may be pleaded in her favour, in the present contention—she who has for so many years, and with such absolute resignation, borne what she has borne to the sacrifice of her own will, may think it an easier task than another person can imagine it, for her daughter to give up *hers*. But to think to whose instigation all this is originally

* Henry VII.

owing—God forgive me; but with such usage I should have been with Lovelace before now! Yet remember, my dear, that the step which would not be wondered at from such an hasty-tempered creature as me, would be inexcusable in such a considerate person as you.

After your mother has been thus drawn in against her judgment, I am the less surprised, that your aunt Hervey should go along with her; since the two sisters never separate. I have inquired into the nature of the obligation which Mr. Hervey's indifferent conduct in his affairs has laid him under—it is only, it seems, that your brother has paid off for him a mortgage upon one part of his estate, which the mortgagee was about to foreclose; and taken it upon himself. A small favour (as he has ample security in his hands) from kindred to kindred: but such a one, it is plain, as has laid the whole family of the Herveys under obligation to the ungenerous lender, who has treated him, and his aunt too (as Miss Dolly Hervey has privately complained), with the less ceremony ever since.

Must I, my dear, call such a creature your *brother?* —I believe I must—Because he is your *father's son*. There is no harm, I hope, in saying that.

I am concerned, that you ever wrote at all to him. It was taking too much notice of him: it was adding to his self-significance; and a call upon him to treat you with insolence. A call which you might have been assured he would not fail to answer.

But such a pretty master as this, to run riot against such a man as Lovelace; who had taught him to put his sword into his scabbard, when he had pulled it out by accident!—These in-door insolents, who, turning themselves into bugbears, frighten women, children, and servants, are generally cravens among men. Were he to come fairly across me, and say to my face some of the free things which I am told he has said of me

behind my back, or that (as by your account) he has said of our sex, I would take upon myself to ask him two or three questions; although he were to send *me* a challenge likewise.

I repeat, you know that I will speak my mind, and *write* it too. He is not *my* brother. Can you say, he is *yours?*—So, for your life, if you are just, you can't be angry with me: For would you side with a *false brother* against a *true friend?* A brother may *not* be a friend: but a friend will be *always* a brother—*mind that*, as your uncle *Tony* says!

I cannot descend so low, as to take very particular notice of the epistles of these poor souls, whom you call *uncles*. Yet I love to divert myself with such grotesque characters too. But I know *them* and love *you;* and so cannot make the jest of them which their absurdities call for.

You chide me, my dear,* for my freedoms with relations still nearer and dearer to you, than either uncles or brother or sister. You had better have permitted me (uncorrected) to have taken my own way. Do not those freedoms naturally arise from the subject before us? And from *whom* arises that subject, I pray you? Can you for one quarter of an hour put yourself in my place, or in the place of those who are still more indifferent to the case than I can be?—If you *can*—But although I have you not often at advantage, I will not push you.

Permit me, however, to subjoin, that well may your father love your mother, as you say he does. A wife who has no will but his! But were there not, think you, some struggles between them at first, gout out of the question?—Your mother, when a maiden, had, as I have heard (and it is very likely) a good share of those lively spirits which she liked in your father.

* See Vol. I. Letter XXVIII.

She has none of them now. How came they to be dissipated?—Ah! my dear!—she has been too long resident in Trophonius's cave, I doubt.*

Let me add one reflection upon this subject, and so entitle myself to your correction for all at once.—It is upon the conduct of those wives (for you and I know more than *one* such) who can suffer themselves to be out-blustered and out-gloomed of their own wills, instead of being fooled out of them by acts of tenderness and complaisance.—I wish, that it does not demonstrate too evidently, that, with some of the sex, insolent controul is a more efficacious subduer than kindness or concession. Upon my life, my dear, I have often thought, that many of us are mere babies in matrimony: perverse fools when too much indulged and humoured; creeping slaves, when treated harshly. But shall it be said, that *fear* makes us more gentle obligers than *love?*—Forbid it, Honour! Forbid it, Gratitude! Forbid it, Justice! that any woman of sense should give occasion to have this said of her!

Did I think you would have any manner of doubt, from the style or contents of this letter, whose saucy pen it is that has run on at this rate, I would write my name at length; since it comes too much from my heart to disavow it: but at present the initials shall serve; and I will go on again directly.

A. H.

LETTER IV

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Morn. 10 o'clock (Mar. 23).

I WILL postpone, or perhaps pass by, several observations which I had to make on other parts of your

* Spectator, Vol. VIII. No. 599.

letters; to acquaint you, that Mr. Hickman, when in London, found an opportunity to inquire after Mr. Lovelace's town life and conversation.

At the Cocoa-tree, in Pall-mall, he fell in with two of his intimates, the one named Belton, the other Mowbray; both very free of speech, and probably as free in their lives: but the waiters paid them great respect, and on Mr. Hickman's inquiry after their characters, called them men of fortune and honour.

They began to talk of Mr. Lovelace of their own accord; and upon some gentlemen in the room asking, when they expected him in town, answered, that very day. Mr. Hickman (as they both went on praising Lovelace) said, he had indeed heard, that Mr. Lovelace was a very fine gentleman—and was proceeding, when one of them, interrupting him, said,—Only, Sir, the finest gentleman in the world; that's all.

And so he led them on to expatiate more particularly on his qualities; which they were very fond of doing: but said not one single word in behalf of his morals—*Mind that* also, in your uncle's style.

Mr. Hickman said, that Mr. Lovelace was very happy, as he understood, in the esteem of the ladies; and smiling, to make them believe he did not think amiss of it, that he pushed his good fortune as far as it would go.

Well put, Mr. Hickman! thought I; equally grave and sage—thou seemest not to be a stranger to their dialect, as I suppose this is. But I said nothing; for I have often tried to find out this *mighty* sober man of my mother's: but hitherto have only to say, that he is either very moral, or very cunning.

No doubt of it, replied one of them; and out came an oath, with a Who would not?—That he did as every young fellow would do.

Very true! said my mother's puritan—but I hear he is in treaty with a fine lady—

So he was, Mr. Belton said—The devil fetch her! [vile brute!] for she engrossed all his time—but that the lady's family ought to be—something—[Mr. Hickman desired to be excused repeating what—though he had repeated what was worse] and might dearly repent their usage of a man of his family and merit.

Perhaps they may think him too wild, cries Hickman: and theirs is, I hear, a very sober family—

Sober! said one of them: A good honest word, Dick!—Where the devil has it lain all this time?—D— me if I have heard of it in this sense ever since I was at college! and then, said he, we bandied it about among twenty of us as an obsolete.

These, my dear, are Mr. Lovelace's companions: you'll be pleased to take *notice of that!*

Mr. Hickman said, this put him out of countenance.

I stared at him, and with such a meaning in my eyes, as he knew how to take; and so was out of countenance again.

Don't you remember, my dear, who it was that told a young gentleman designed for the gown, who owned that he was apt to be too easily put out of countenance when he came into free company, 'That it was a bad sign; that it looked as if his morals were not proof; but that his good disposition seemed rather the effect of accident and education, than of such a choice as was founded upon principle?' And don't you know the lesson the very same young lady gave him, 'To endeavour to stem and discountenance vice, and to glory in being an advocate in all companies for virtue;' particularly observing, 'That it was natural for a man to shun or to give up what he was ashamed of?' Which she should be sorry to think *his* case on this

occasion: adding, 'That vice was a coward, and would hide its head, when opposed by such a virtue as had presence of mind, and a full persuasion of its own rectitude to support it.' The lady, you may remember, modestly put her doctrine into the mouth of a worthy preacher, Dr. Lewen, as she uses to do, when she has a mind not to be thought to be what she is at so early an age; and that it may give more weight to any thing *she hit upon, that might appear tolerable*, was her modest manner of speech.

Mr. Hickman, upon the whole, professed to me, upon his *second recovery*, that he had no reason to think well of Mr. Lovelace's morals, from what he heard of him in town; yet his two intimates talked of his being *more regular* than he *used to be*. That he had made a very good resolution, *that* of old Tom Wharton, was the expression, That he would never *give* a challenge, nor *refuse* one; which they praised in him highly: that, in short, he was a very brave fellow, and the most agreeable companion in the world: and would one day make a great figure in his country; since there was nothing he was not capable of—

I am afraid that his last assertion is too true. And this, my dear, is all that Mr. Hickman could pick up about him: And is it not enough to determine such a mind as yours, if not *already* determined?

Yet it must be said too, that if there be a woman in the world that can reclaim him, it is you. And, by your account of his behaviour in the interview between you, I own I have some hope of him. At least, this I will say, that all the arguments he then used with you, seemed to be just and right. And if you *are* to be his—But no more of that: he cannot, after all, deserve you.

LETTER V

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Afternoon, March 23.

An unexpected visitor has turned the course of my thoughts, and changed the subject I had intended to pursue. The only one for whom I would have dispensed with my resolution not to see any body all the dedicated day: a visiter, whom, according to Mr. Hickman's report from the expectations of his libertine friends, I supposed to be in town.—Now, my dear, have I saved myself the trouble of telling you, that it was your too-agreeable rake. Our sex is said to love to trade in surprises: yet have I, by my promptitude, surprised myself out of mine. I had intended, you must know, to run twice the length, before I had suffered you so much as to guess who, and whether man or woman, my visiter was: but since you have the discovery at so cheap a rate, you are welcome to it.

The end of his coming was, to engage my interest with my *charming friend;* and he was sure that I knew all your mind, to acquaint him what he had to trust to.

He mentioned what had passed in the interview between you: but could not be satisfied with the result of it, and with the little satisfaction he had obtained from you: the malice of your family to him increasing, and their cruelty to you not abating. His heart, he told me, was in tumults, for fear you should be prevailed upon in favour of a man despised by every body.

He gave me fresh instances of indignities cast upon himself by your uncles and brother; and declared, that if you suffered yourself to be forced into the

arms of the man for whose sake he was loaded with undeserved abuses, you should be one of the youngest, as you would be one of the loveliest widows in England. And that he would moreover call your brother to account for the liberties he takes with his character to every one he meets with.

He proposed several schemes, for you to choose some one of them, in order to enable you to avoid the persecutions you labour under: One I will mention—That you will resume your estate; and if you find difficulties that can be no otherwise surmounted, that you will, either avowedly or privately, as he had proposed to you, accept of Lady Betty Lawrance's or Lord M.'s assistance to instate you in it. He declared, that if you did, he would leave absolutely to your own pleasure afterwards, and to the advice which your cousin Morden on his arrival should give you, whether to encourage his address, or not, as you should be convinced of the sincerity of the reformation which his enemies make him so much want.

I had now a good opportunity to sound him, as you wished Mr. Hickman would Lord M. as to the continued or diminished favour of the ladies, and of his Lordship, towards you, upon their being acquainted with the animosity of your relations to them, as well as to their kinsman. I laid hold of the opportunity, and he satisfied me, by reading some passages of a letter he had about him, from Lord M. That an alliance with you, and that on the foot of your own single merit, would be the most desirable event to them that could happen: and so far to the purpose of your wished inquiry does his Lordship go in this letter, that he assures him, that whatever you suffer in fortune from the violence of your relations on *his* account, he and Lady Sarah and Lady Betty will join to make it up to him. And yet that the reputation of

a family so splendid, would, no doubt, in a case of such importance to the honour of both, make them prefer a general consent.

I told him, as you yourself I knew had done, that you were extremely averse to Mr. Solmes; and that, might you be left to your own choice, it would be the single life. As to himself, I plainly said, That you had great and just objections to him on the score of his careless morals: that it was surprising, that men who gave themselves the liberties he was said to take, should presume to think, that whenever they took it into their heads to marry, the most virtuous and worthy of the sex were to fall to their lot. That as to the resumption, it had been very strongly urged by myself, and would be still further urged; though you had been hitherto averse to that measure: that your chief reliance and hopes were upon your cousin Morden; and that to suspend or gain time till he arrived, was, as I believed, your principal aim.

I told him, That with regard to the mischief he threatened, neither the act nor the menace could serve any end but theirs who persecuted you; as it would give them a pretence for carrying into effect their compulsory projects; and that with the approbation of all the world; since he must not think the public would give its voice in favour of a violent young man, of no extraordinary character as to morals, who should seek to rob a family of eminence of a child so valuable; and who threatened, if he could not obtain her in preference to a man chosen by themselves, that he would avenge himself upon them all by acts of violence.

I added, That he was very much mistaken, if he thought to intimidate *you* by such menaces: for that, though your disposition was all sweetness, yet I knew not a steadier temper in the world than yours; nor one more inflexible, (as your friends had found, and would

still further find, if they continued to give occasion for its exertion,) whenever you thought yourself in the right; and that you were ungenerously dealt with in matters of too much moment to be indifferent about. Miss Clarissa Harlowe, Mr. Lovelace, let me tell you, said I, timid as her foresight and prudence may make her in some cases, where she apprehends dangers to those she loves, is above fear, in points where her honour, and the true dignity of her sex, are concerned. —In short, Sir, you must not think to frighten Miss Clarissa Harlowe into such a mean or unworthy conduct as only a weak or unsteady mind can be guilty of.

He was so very far from intending to intimidate you, he said, that he besought me not to mention one word to you of what had passed between us: that what he had hinted at, which carried the air of a menace, was owing to the fervour of his spirits, raised by his apprehensions of losing all hope of you for ever; and on a supposition, that you were to be actually forced into the arms of a man you hated: that were this to be the case, he must own, that he should pay very little regard to the world, or its censures: especially as the menaces of some of your family now, and their triumph over him afterwards, would both provoke and warrant all the vengeance he could take.

He added, that all the countries in the world were alike to him, but on your account: so that, whatever he should think fit to do, were you lost to *him*, he should have nothing to apprehend from the laws of this.

I did not like the determined air he spoke this with: he is certainly capable of great rashness.

He palliated a little this fierceness (which by the way I warmly censured) by saying, That while you remain single, he will bear all the indignities that shall be cast upon him by your family. But would you

throw yourself, if you were still farther driven, into any *other* protection, if not Lord M.'s, or that of the ladies of his family, into my mother's,* suppose; or would you go to London to private lodgings, where he would never visit you, unless he had your leave (and from whence you might make your own terms with your relations); he would be entirely satisfied; and would, as he had said before, wait the effect of your cousin's arrival, and your free determination as to his own fate. Adding, That he knew the family so well, and how much fixed they were upon their measures, as well as the absolute dependence they had upon your temper and principles, that he could not but apprehend the worst, while you remained in their power, and under the influence of their persuasion and menaces.

We had a great deal of other discourse: but as the reciting of the rest would be but a repetition of many of the things that passed between you and him in the interview between you in the wood-house, I refer myself to your memory on that occasion. †

And now, my dear, upon the whole, I think it behoves you to make yourself independent: all then will fall right. This man is a violent man. I should wish, methinks, that you should not have either him or Solmes. You will find, if you get out of your brother's and sister's way, what you *can* or *cannot* do, with regard to either.

* Perhaps it will be unnecessary to remind the reader, that although Mr. Lovelace proposes (as above) to Miss Howe, that her fair friend should have recourse to the protection of Mrs. Howe, if farther driven; yet he had artfully taken care, by means of his agent in the Harlowe family, not only to inflame the family against her, but to deprive her of Mrs. Howe's, and of every other protection, being from the first resolved to reduce her to an absolute dependence upon himself. See Vol. I. Letter XXXI.

† See Vol. I. Letter XXXVI.

If your relations persist in their foolish scheme, I think I will take his hint, and, at a proper opportunity, sound my mother. Mean time, let me have your clear opinion of the resumption, which I join with Lovelace in advising. You can but see how your demand will work. To *demand*, is not to *litigate*. But be your resolution what it will, do not by any means repeat to them, that you will not assert your right. If they go on to give you provocation, you may have sufficient reason to change your mind: and let them expect that you *will* change it. They have not the generosity to treat you the better for disclaiming the power they know you have. *That*, I think, need not now be told you. I am, my dearest friend, and will be ever,

Your most affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER VI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Wedn. Night, March 22.

ON the report made by my aunt and sister of my *obstinacy*, my assembled relations have taken an *unanimous* resolution (as Betty tells me it is) against me. This resolution you will find signified to me in the inclosed letter from my brother, just now brought me. Be pleased to return it, when perused. I may have occasion for it, in the altercations between my relations and me.

MISS CLARY,

I am commanded to let you know, that my father and uncles having heard your aunt Hervey's account of all that has passed between her and you: having

heard from your sister what sort of treatment she has had from you: having recollected all that has passed between your mother and you: having weighed all your pleas and proposals: having taken into consideration their engagements with Mr. Solmes; that gentleman's patience, and great affection for you; and the little opportunity you have given yourself to be acquainted either with his merit, or his proposals: having considered two points more; to wit, the wounded authority of a father; and Mr. Solmes's continued entreaties (little as you have deserved regard from him) that you may be freed from a confinement to which he is desirous to attribute your perverseness to him [*averseness* I should have said, but let it go], he being unable to account otherwise for so strong a one, supposing you told truth to your mother, when you asserted that your heart was *free;* and which Mr. Solmes is willing to believe, though nobody else does—For all these reasons, it is resolved, that you shall go to your uncle Antony's: and you must accordingly prepare yourself so to do. You will have but short notice of the day, for obvious reasons.

I will honestly tell you the motive for your going: it is a double one; first, That they may be sure, that you shall not correspond with any body they do not like (for they find from Mrs. Howe, that, by some means or other, you *do* correspond with her daughter; and, through her, perhaps with somebody else): and next, That you may receive the visits of Mr. Solmes; which you have thought fit to refuse to do here; by which means you have deprived yourself of the opportunity of knowing *whom* and *what* you have hitherto refused.

If after one fortnight's conversation with Mr. Solmes, and after you have heard what your friends shall further urge in his behalf, unhardened by clandestine correspondencies, you shall convince them, that

Virgil's *amor omnibus idem* (for the application of which I refer you to the Georgic as translated by Dryden) is verified in you, as well as in the rest of the animal creation; and that you cannot, or will not forego your prepossession in favour of the *moral*, the *virtuous*, the *pious* Lovelace, [I would please you if I could!] it will then be considered, whether to humour you, or to renounce you for ever.

It is hoped, that as you *must* go, you will go cheerfully. Your uncle Antony will make every thing at his house agreeable to you. But indeed he won't promise, that he will not, at *proper times*, draw up the bridge.

Your visiters, besides Mr. Solmes, will be myself, if you permit me that honour, Miss Clary; your sister; and, as you behave to Mr. Solmes, your aunt Hervey, and your uncle Harlowe; and yet the two latter will hardly come neither, if they think it will be to hear your *whining vocatives*.—Betty Barnes will be your attendant: and I must needs tell you, Miss, that we none of us think the worse of the faithful maid for your dislike of her: although Betty, who would be glad to oblige you, laments it as a misfortune.

Your answer is required, whether you *cheerfully* consent to go? And your indulgent mother bids me remind you from her, that a fortnight's visits from Mr. Solmes, are all that is meant at present.

I am, as you shall be pleased to deserve,

Yours, &c.

JAMES HARLOWE, JUN.

So here is the master-stroke of my brother's policy! Called upon to consent to go to my uncle Antony's *avowedly* to receive Mr. Solmes's visits!—A chapel! A moated-house!—Deprived of the opportunity of corresponding with you!—or of any possibility of

escape, should violence be used to compel me to be that odious man's!*

Late as it was when I received this insolent letter, I wrote an answer to it directly, that it might be ready for the writer's time of rising. I inclose the rough draught of it. You will see by it how much his vile hint from the Georgic; and his rude one of my *whining vocatives*, have set me up. Besides, as the command to get ready to go to my uncle's is in the name of my father and uncles, it is but to shew a piece of the art they accuse me of, to resent the vile hint I have so much reason to resent in order to palliate my refusal of preparing to go to my uncle's; which refusal would otherwise be interpreted an act of rebellion by my brother and sister: for it seems plain to me, *that they will work but half their ends, if they do not deprive me of my father's and uncles' favour, even although it were possible for me to comply with their own terms.*

You might have told me, Brother, in three lines, what the determination of my friends was; only, that then you would not have had room to display your pedantry by so detestable an allusion or reference to the Georgic. Give me leave to tell you, Sir, that if *humanity* were a branch of your studies at the university, it has not found a genius in you for mastering it. Nor is either my sex or myself, though a sister, I see entitled to the least decency from a brother, who has studied, as it seems, rather to cultivate the malevolence of his natural temper, than any tendency which one would have hoped his parentage, if not his education, might have given him to a tolerable politeness.

* These violent measures, and the obstinate perseverance of the whole family in them, will be the less wondered at, when it is considered, that all the time they were but as so many puppets danced upon Mr. Lovelace's wires, as he boasts, Vol. I. Letter XXXI.

I doubt not, that you will take amiss my freedom: but as you have deserved it from me, I shall be less and less concerned on that score, as I see you are more and more intent to shew your wit at the expense of justice and compassion.

The time is indeed come that I can no longer bear those contempts and reflections which a brother, least of all men, is entitled to give. And let me beg of you one favour, officious Sir:—It is *this*, That you will not give yourself any concern about a husband for *me*, till I shall have the forwardness to propose a wife to *you*. Pardon me, Sir; but I cannot help thinking, that could I have the art to *get my father* of my side, I should have as much right to prescribe for you, as you have for me.

As to the communication you make me, I must take upon me to say, That although I will receive, as becomes me, any of my father's commands; yet, as this signification is made by a brother, who has shewn of late so much of an unbrotherly animosity to me, (for no reason in the world that I know of, but that he believes he has, in me, *one* sister too much for his interest,) I think myself entitled to conclude, that such a letter as you have sent me, is all your own: and of course to declare, that, while I *so* think it, I will not willingly, nor even without violence, go to any place, avowedly to receive Mr. Solmes's visits.

I think myself so much entitled to resent your infamous hint, and this as well for the sake of my sex, as for my own, that I ought to declare, as I do, that I will not receive any more of your letters, unless commanded to do so by an authority I never will dispute; except in a case where I think my *future* as well as *present* happiness concerned: and were such a case to happen, I am sure my father's harshness will be less owing to himself than to you; and to the specious

absurdities of your ambitious and selfish schemes.—Very true, Sir!

One word more, provoked as I am, I will add: That had I been thought as really obstinate and perverse as of late I am said to be, I should not have been so disgracefully treated as I have been—Lay your hand upon your heart, Brother, and say, By whose instigations?—And examine what I have done to deserve to be made thus unhappy, and to be obliged to style myself

Your injured sister,
Cl. Harlowe.

When, my dear, you have read my answer to my brother's letter, tell me what you think of me?—It *shall go!*

LETTER VII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Thursday Morning, March 23.

My letter has set them *all* in tumults: for, it seems, none of them went home last night; and they all were desired to be present to give their advice, if I should refuse compliance with a command thought so reasonable as it seems this is.

Betty tells me, that at first my father, in a rage, was for coming up to me himself, and for turning me out of his doors directly. Nor was he restrained, till it was hinted to him, that that was no doubt my wish, and would answer all my perverse views. But the result was, that my brother (having really, as my mother and aunt insisted, taken wrong measures with me) should write again in a more *moderate* manner: for nobody else was permitted or cared to write to such

a *ready scribbler*. And, I having declared, that I would not receive any more of his letters, without command from a superior authority, my mother was to give it *hers :* and accordingly has done so in the following lines, written on the superscription of his letter to me : which letter also follows ; together with my reply.

Clary Harlowe,

Receive and read this, with the temper that becomes your sex, your character, your education, and your duty : and return an answer to it, directed to your brother.

Charlotte Harlowe.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Morning.

Once more I write, although imperiously prohibited by a younger sister. Your mother will have me do so, that you may be destitute of all defence, if you persist in your *pervicacy*. Shall I be a pedant, Miss, for this word ? She is willing to indulge in you the *least* appearance of that delicacy for which she once, as well as every body else, admired you—before you knew Lovelace ; I cannot, however, help saying *that :* and she, and your aunt Hervey, will have it—[they would fain favour you, if they could] that I may have provoked from you the answer they nevertheless own to be so exceedingly *unbecoming*. I am now learning, you see, to take up the softer language, where you have laid it down. This then is the case :

They *entreat*, they *pray*, they *beg*, they *supplicate* (will either of these do, Miss Clary ?) that you will make no scruple to go to your uncle Antony's : and fairly I am to tell you, for the very purpose mentioned

in my last—or, 'tis presumable, they need not *entreat*, *beg*, *pray*, *supplicate*. Thus much is promised to Mr. Solmes, who is your advocate, and very uneasy that you should be under constraint, supposing that your dislike to him arises from that. And, if he finds that you are not to be moved in his favour, when you are absolutely freed from what you call a *controul*, he will forbear thinking of you, whatever it costs him. He loves you too well: and in *this*, I really think, his understanding, which you have reflected upon, is to be questioned.

Only for one fornight, therefore, permit his visits. Your *education* (you tell me of *mine*, you know) ought to make you incapable of rudeness to any body. He will not, I hope, be the first man, myself excepted, whom you ever treated rudely, purely because he is esteemed by us all. I am, what you have a mind to make me, friend, brother, or servant—I wish I could be still *more* polite, to so polite, to so delicate, a sister.

JA. HARLOWE.

You must still write to *me*, if you condescend to reply. Your mother will not be permitted to be disturbed with your nothing-meaning vocatives!—*Vocatives*, once more, Madam Clary, repeats the *pedant* your brother!

TO JAMES HARLOWE, JUNIOR, ESQ.

Thursday, March 23.

PERMIT me, my ever-dear and honoured Papa and Mamma, in this manner to surprise you into an *audience*, (presuming this will be read to you,) since I am denied the honour of writing to you directly. Let me beg of you to believe, that nothing but the most unconquerable

dislike could make me stand against your pleasure. What are riches, what are settlements, to happiness? Let me not thus cruelly be given up to a man my very soul is averse to. Permit me to repeat, that I cannot *honestly* be his. Had I a slighter notion of the matrimonial duty than I have, perhaps I might. But when I am to bear all the misery, and that for *life*; when my *heart* is less concerned in this matter, than my *soul*; my *temporary*, perhaps, than my *future* good; why should I be denied the liberty of *refusing?* That liberty is all I ask.

It were easy for me to give way to hear Mr. Solmes talk for the mentioned fortnight, although it is impossible for me, say what he would, to get over my dislike to him. But the moated-house, the chapel there, and the little mercy my brother and sister, who are to be there, have hitherto shewn me, are what I am extremely apprehensive of. And why does my brother say, my restraint is to be taken off, (and that too at Mr. Solmes's desire,) when I am to be a still closer prisoner than before; the bridge threatened to be drawn up; and no dear papa and mamma near me, to appeal to, in the last resort?

Transfer not, I beseech you, to a brother and sister your own authority over your child—to a brother and sister, who treat me with unkindness and reproach; and, as I have too much reason to apprehend, misrepresent my words and behaviour; or, greatly favoured as I used to be, it is impossible I should be sunk so low in your opinions, as I unhappily am!

Let but this my hard, my disgraceful confinement be put an end to. Permit me, my dear Mamma, to pursue my needleworks in your presence, as one of your maidens; and you shall be witness, that it is not either wilfulness or prepossession that governs me. Let me not, however, be put out of your own house.

Let Mr. Solmes come and go, as my papa pleases: let me but stay or retire when he comes, as I can; and leave the rest to Providence.

Forgive me, Brother, that thus, with an appearance of art, I address myself to my father and mother, to whom I am forbidden to approach, or to write. Hard it is to be reduced to such a contrivance! Forgive likewise the plain dealing I have used in the above, with the nobleness of a gentleman, and the gentleness due from a brother to a sister. Although of late you have given me but little room to hope either for your favour or compassion; yet, having not deserved to forfeit *either*, I presume to claim *both:* for I am confident it is at present much in your power, although but my brother (my honoured parents both, I bless God, in being), to give peace to the greatly disturbed mind of

Your unhappy sister,
Cl. Harlowe.

Betty tells me, my brother has taken my letter all in pieces; and has undertaken to write such an answer to it, as shall confirm the *wavering*. So, it is plain, that I should have moved somebody by it, but for this hard-hearted brother—God forgive him!

LETTER VIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Thursday Night, March 23.

I send you the boasted confutation-letter, just now put into my hands. My brother and sister, my uncle

Antony and Mr. Solmes, are, I understand, exulting over the copy of it below, as an unanswerable performance.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

ONCE again, my inflexible Sister, I write to you. It is to let you know, that the pretty piece of art you found out to make me the vehicle of your whining pathetics to your father and mother, has not had the expected effect.

I do assure you, that your behaviour has not been misrepresented—nor need it. Your mother, who is solicitous to take all opportunities of putting the most favourable constructions upon all you do, has been forced, as you well know, to give you up, upon full trial. No need then of the expedient of pursuing your needleworks in her sight. She cannot bear your whining pranks: and it is for *her* sake, that you are not permitted to come into her presence—nor will be, but upon her own terms.

You had like to have made a simpleton of your aunt Hervey yesterday: she came down from you, pleading in your favour. But when she was asked, What concession she had brought you to? she looked about her, and knew not what to answer. So your mother, when surprised into the beginning of your cunning address to her and to your father, under my name, (for I had begun to read it, little suspecting such an *ingenious* subterfuge,) and would then make me read it through, wrung her hands, Oh! her dear child, her dear child, must not be so compelled!—But when she was asked, Whether she would be willing to have for her son-in-law the man who bids defiance to her whole family; and who had like to have murdered her son? And what concession she had gained from her dear child to merit this tenderness? And that

for one who had apparently deceived her in assuring her that her heart *was free?*—Then could she look about her, as her sister had done before: then was she again brought to herself, and to a resolution to assert her authority [not to *transfer* it, witty presumer!] over the rebel who of late has so ungratefully struggled to throw it off.

You seem, child, to have a high notion of the matrimonial duty; and I'll warrant, like the rest of your sex, (one or two, whom I have the honour to know, excepted,) that you will go to church to promise what you will never think of afterwards. But, *sweet* child! as your *worthy* Mamma Norton calls you, think a little less of the *matrimonial*, (at least, till you come into that state,) and a little more of the *filial* duty.

How can you say, you are to bear *all the misery*, when you give so large a share of it to your parents, to your uncles, to your aunt, to myself, and to your sister; who all, for eighteen years of your life, loved you so well?

If of late I have not given you room to hope for my favour or compassion, it is because of late you have not deserved either. I know what you mean, little reflecting fool, by saying, it is much in my power, although *but* your brother, (a very slight degree of relationship with you,) to give you that peace which you can give yourself whenever you please.

The liberty of *refusing*, pretty Miss, is denied you, because we are all sensible, that the liberty of *choosing*, to every one's dislike, must follow. The vile wretch you have set your heart upon speaks this plainly to every body, though you won't. He says you are *his*, and shall be *his*, and he will be the death of any man who robs him of his PROPERTY. So, Miss, we have a mind to try this point with him. My father, sup-

posing he has the right of a father in his child, is absolutely determined not to be bullied out of that right. And what must that child be, who prefers the rake to a father?

This is the light in which this whole debate ought to be taken. Blush, then, Delicacy, that cannot bear the poet's *amor omnibus idem!*—Blush, then, Purity! Be ashamed, Virgin Modesty! And, if capable of conviction, surrender your whole will to the will of the honoured pair, to whom you owe your being: and beg of all your friends to forgive and forget the part you have of late acted.

I have written a longer letter than ever I designed to write to you, after the insolent treatment and prohibition you have given me: and, now I am commissioned to tell you, that your friends are as weary of confining you, as you are of being confined. And therefore you must prepare yourself to go in a very few days, as you have been told before, to your uncle Antony's; who, notwithstanding your apprehensions, will draw up his bridge when he pleases; will see what company he pleases in his own house; nor will he demolish his chapel to cure you of your foolish late-commenced antipathy to a place of divine worship.—The more foolish, as, if we intended to use force, we could have the ceremony pass in your chamber, as well as any where else.

Prejudice against Mr. Solmes has evidently blinded you, and there is a *charitable* necessity to open your eyes: since no one but you thinks the gentleman so contemptible in his *person;* nor, for a plain country gentleman, who has too much solid sense to appear like a coxcomb, justly blamable in his *manners*.—And as to his *temper*, it is necessary you should speak upon fuller knowledge, than at present it is plain you can have of him.

Upon the whole, it will not be amiss, that you prepare for your speedy removal, as well for the sake of your own conveniency, as to shew your readiness, in *one* point, at least, to oblige your friends; one of whom you may, if you please to deserve it, reckon, though *but* a brother,

JAMES HARLOWE.

P. S. If you are disposed to see Mr. Solmes, and to make some excuses to him for past conduct, in order to be able to meet him *somewhere else* with the less concern to yourself for your freedoms with him, he shall attend you where you please.

If you have a mind to read the settlements, before they are read to you for your signing, they shall be sent you up—Who knows, but they will help you to some fresh objections?—Your heart is *free*, you know—It *must*—For, did you not tell your mother it was? And will the *pious* Clarissa fib to her mamma?

I desire no reply. The case requires none. Yet I will ask you, Have you, Miss, no more proposals to make?

I was so vexed when I came to the end of this letter, (the postscript to which, perhaps, might be written after the others had seen the letter,) that I took up my pen, with an intent to write to my uncle Harlowe about resuming my own estate, in pursuance of your advice. But my heart failed me, when I recollected, that I had not one friend to stand by or support me in my claim; and it would but the more incense them, without answering any good end. Oh! that my cousin were but come!

Is it not a sad thing, beloved as I thought myself

so lately by every one, that now I have not one person in the world to plead for me, to stand by me, or who would afford me refuge, were I to be under the necessity of seeking for it!—I who had the vanity to think I had as many friends as I saw faces, and flattered myself too, that it was not altogether unmerited, because I saw not my Maker's image, either in man, woman, or child, high or low, rich or poor, whom, comparatively, I loved not as myself.—Would to heaven, my dear, that you were married! Perhaps, then, you could have induced Mr. Hickman to afford me protection, till these storms were over-blown. But then this might have involved *him* in difficulties and dangers; and that I would not have had done for the world.

I don't know what to do, not I!—God forgive me, but I am very impatient! I wish—But I don't know what to wish, without a sin!—Yet I wish it would please God to take me to his mercy!—I can meet with none here—What a world is this!—What is there in it desirable? The good we hope for, so strangely mixed, that one knows not what to wish for! And one half of mankind tormenting the other, and being tormented themselves in tormenting!—For here in this my particular case, my relations cannot be happy, though they make me unhappy!—Except my brother and sister, indeed—and they seem to take delight in and enjoy the mischief they make.

But it is time to lay down my pen, since my ink runs nothing but gall.

LETTER IX

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday Morning, Six o'clock.

Mrs. Betty tells me, there is now nothing talked of but of my going to my uncle Antony's. She has been ordered, she says, to get ready to attend me thither: and, upon my expressing my averseness to go, had the confidence to say, That having heard me often praise the *romanticness* of the place, she was astonished (her hands and eyes lifted up) that I should set myself against going to a house so much in *my taste*.

I asked if this was her own insolence, or her young mistress's observation?

She half-astonished *me* by her answer: That it was hard she could not say a *good* thing, without being robbed of the merit of it.

As the wench looked as if she really thought she had said a good thing, without knowing the boldness of it, I let it pass. But, to say the truth, this creature has surprised me on many occasions with her smartness: for, since she has been employed in this controuling office, I have discovered a great deal of wit in her assurance, which I never suspected before. This shews, that insolence is her talent: and that Fortune, in placing her as a servant to my sister, had not done so kindly by her as Nature; for that she would make a better figure as her *companion*. And indeed I can't help thinking sometimes, that I myself was better fitted by *Nature* to be the servant of *both*, than the *mistress* of the *one*, or the *servant* of the *other*. And within these few months past, *Fortune* has acted by me, as if she were of the same mind.

Friday, Ten o'Clock.

Going down to my poultry-yard, just now, I heard my brother and sister and that Solmes laughing and triumphing together. The high yew-hedge between us, which divides the yard from the garden, hindered them from seeing me.

My brother, as I found, had been reading part, or the whole perhaps, of the copy of his last letter—Mighty prudent, and consistent, you'll say, with their views to make me the wife of a man from whom they conceal not what, were I to be such, it would be kind in them to endeavour to conceal, out of regard to my future peace!—But I have no doubt, that they hate me heartily.

Indeed, you was up with her there, brother, said my sister. You need not have bid her not to write to you. I'll engage, with all her wit, she'll never pretend to answer it.

Why, indeed, said my brother, with an air of college-sufficiency, with which he abounds, (for he thinks nobody writes like himself,) I believe I have given her a *choke-pear*. What say you, Mr. Solmes?

Why, Sir, said he, I think it is unanswerable. But will it not exasperate her more against me?

Never fear, Mr. Solmes, said my brother, but we'll carry our point, if she do not tire *you* out first. We have gone too far in this method to recede. Her cousin Morden will soon be here: so all must be over before that time, or she'll be made independent of us all.

There, Miss Howe, is the reason given for their jehu-driving.

Mr. Solmes declared, that he was determined to persevere while my brother gave him any hopes, and while my father stood firm.

My sister told my brother, that he *hit me charmingly*

on the reason why I ought to converse with Mr. Solmes: but that he should not be so smart upon the *sex*, for the faults of *this perverse girl.*

Some lively, and, I suppose, witty answer, my brother returned; for he and Mr. Solmes laughed outrageously upon it, and Bella, laughing too, called him a naughty man: but I heard no more of what they said; they walked on into the garden.

If you think, my dear, that what I have related did not again fire me, you will find yourself mistaken when you read at this place the enclosed copy of my letter to my brother; struck off while the iron was red hot.

No more call me meek and gentle, I beseech you.

TO MR. JAMES HARLOWE

Friday Morning.

SIR,

If, notwithstanding your prohibition, I should be silent, on occasion of your last, you would, perhaps, conclude, that I was consenting to go to my uncle Antony's upon the condition you mention. My father must do as he pleases with his child. He may turn me out of his doors, if he thinks fit, or give *you* leave to do it; but (loth as I am to say it) I should think it very hard to be carried by force to any body's house, when I have one of *my own* to go to.

Far be it from me, notwithstanding yours and my sister's provocations, to think of my taking my estate into my own hands, without my father's leave: But why, if I must not stay any longer here, may I not be permitted to go thither? I will engage to see nobody they would not have me see, if this favour be permitted. *Favour* I call it, and am ready to receive and acknowledge it as such, although my grandfather's will has made it matter of right.

You ask me, in a very unbrotherly manner, in the postscript to your letter, if I have not some new proposals to make? I HAVE (since you put the question) three or four; *new ones* all, I think; though I will be bold to say, that, submitting the case to any one person whom *you* have not set against me, my *old* ones ought not to have been rejected. I *think* this; why then should I not *write* it?—Nor have you any more reason to storm at your *sister* for telling it you, (since you seem in your letter to make it your boast how you turned my mother and my aunt Hervey against me,) than I have to be angry with my *brother*, for treating me as no brother ought to treat a sister.

These, then, are my new proposals.

That, as above, I may not be hindered from going to reside (under such conditions as shall be prescribed to me, which I will most religiously observe) at my grandfather's late house. I will not again in this place call it *mine*. I have reason to think it a great misfortune that ever it was so—*indeed* I have.

If this be not permitted, I desire leave to go for a month, or for what time shall be thought fit, to Miss Howe's. I dare say my mother will consent to it, if I have my father's permission to go.

If this, neither, be allowed, and I am to be turned out of my father's house, I beg I may be suffered to go to my aunt Hervey's, where I will inviolably observe her commands, and those of my father and mother.

But if this, neither, is to be granted, it is my humble request, that I may be sent to my uncle Harlowe's, instead of my uncle Antony's. I mean not by this any disrespect to my uncle Antony: but his moat, with his bridge threatened to be drawn up, and perhaps the chapel there, terrify me beyond expression, notwithstanding your *witty* ridicule upon me for that apprehension.

If this likewise be refused, and if I *must* be carried to the moated-house, which used to be a delightful one to me, let it be promised me, that I shall not be compelled to receive Mr. Solmes's visits there; and then I will as cheerfully go, as ever I did.

So here, Sir, are my new proposals. And if none of them answer your end, as each of them tends to the exclusion of that ungenerous *persister's* visits, be pleased to know, that there is no misfortune I will not submit to, rather than yield to give my hand to the man to whom I can allow no share in my heart.

If I write in a style different from my usual, and different from what I wished to have occasion to write, an impartial person, who knew what I have accidentally, within this hour past, heard from your mouth, and my sister's, and a third person's, (particularly the reason you give for driving on at this violent rate, to wit, my cousin Morden's soon-expected arrival,) would think I have but too much reason for it. Then be pleased to remember, Sir, that when my *whining vocatives* have subjected me to so much scorn and ridicule, it is time, were it but to *imitate* examples so excellent as *you* and my *sister* set me, that I should endeavour to assert my character, in order to be thought *less an alien*, and *nearer of kin to you both*, than either of you have of late seemed to suppose me.

Give me leave, in order to *empty my female quiver* at once, to add, that I know no other reason which you can have for forbidding me to reply to you, after you have written what you pleased to me, than that you are conscious you cannot answer to reason and to justice the treatment you give me.

If it be otherwise, I, an unlearned, an unlogical girl, younger by near a third than yourself, will venture (so assured am I of the justice of my cause) to put my fate upon an issue with *you:* with *you*, Sir, who have

had the advantage of an academical education; whose mind must have been strengthened by observation, and learned conversation, and who, pardon my going so *low*, have been accustomed to give *choke-pears* to those you vouchsafe to write against.

Any impartial person, your late tutor, for instance, or the pious and worthy Dr. Lewen, may be judge between us: and if either give it against me, I will promise to resign to my destiny: provided, if it be given against you, that my father will be pleased only to allow of my negative to the person so violently sought to be imposed upon me.

I flatter myself, Brother, that you will the readier come into this proposal, as you seem to have a *high* opinion of your talents for argumentation; and not a *low* one of the cogency of the arguments contained in your last letter. And as I can possibly have no advantage in a contention with you, if the justice of my cause affords me not any (as you have no opinion it will,) it behoves you, methinks, to shew to an impartial moderator that *I* am wrong, and *you* not so.

If this be accepted, there is a necessity for its being carried on by the pen; the facts to be stated, and agreed upon by both; and the decision to be given, according to the force of the arguments each shall produce in support of their side of their question: for give me leave to say, I know too well the *manliness* of your temper, to offer at a *personal* debate with you.

If it be not accepted, I shall conclude, that you cannot defend your conduct towards me; and shall only beg of you, that, for the future, you will treat me with the respect due to a sister from a brother who would be thought as polite as learned.

And now, Sir, if I have seemed to shew some spirit, not foreign to the relation I have the honour to be to *you*, and to my *sister*; and which may be deemed not

altogether of a piece with that part of my character which once, it seems, gained me every one's love; be pleased to consider to *whom*, and to *what* it is owing; and that this part of that character was not dispensed with, till it subjected me to that scorn, and to those insults, which a brother, who has been *so tenacious of an independence voluntarily* given up by me, and who has appeared *so exalted* upon it, ought not to have shewn to *any body*, much less to a *weak* and *defenceless* sister; who is, notwithstanding, an affectionate and respectful one, and would be glad to shew herself to be so upon all future occasions; as she has in every action of her past life, although of late she has met with such unkind returns.

CL. HARLOWE.

See, my dear, the force, and volubility, as I may say, of passion; for the letter I send you is my first draught, struck off without a blot or erasure.

Friday, Three o'Clock.

As soon as I had transcribed it, I sent it down to my brother by Mrs. Betty.

The wench came up soon after, all aghast, with a *Laud, Miss!* What *have* you done?—What *have* you written? For you have set them all in a *joyful* uproar!

My sister is but this moment gone from me. She came up all in a flame; which obliged me abruptly to lay down my pen: she ran to me—

O Spirit! said she; tapping my neck a little *too* hard. And is it come to this at last!—

Do you beat me, Bella?

Do you call this beating you? only tapping your shoulder *thus*, said she; tapping again more gently—This is what we *expected* it would come to—You want to be independent—My father has lived too long for you!—

I was going to speak with vehemence; but she put her handkerchief before my mouth, very rudely—You have done enough with your pen, mean listener, as you are!—But *know* that neither your independent scheme, nor any of your visiting ones, will be granted you. Take your course, perverse one! Call in your rake to help you to an *independence* upon your parents, and a *dependence* upon him!—Do so!—Prepare this moment—resolve what you will take with you—to-morrow you go—depend upon it to-morrow you go!—No longer shall you stay here, watching and creeping about to hearken to what people say—'Tis determined, child!—You go to-morrow—my brother would have come up to tell you so; but I persuaded him to the contrary—for I know not what had become of you, if he had—Such a letter! such an insolent, such a *conceited* challenger!—O thou vain creature! But prepare yourself, I say—to-morrow you go—my brother will accept of your bold challenge; but it must be *personal;* and at my uncle Antony's—or perhaps at Mr. Solmes's—

Thus she ran on, almost foaming with passion; till, quite out of patience, I said, No more of your violence, Bella—Had I known in what way you designed to come up, you should not have found my chamber-door open—talk to your *servant* in this manner. Unlike *you*, as I bless God I am, I am nevertheless your sister—and let me tell you, that I won't go to-morrow, nor next day, nor next day to that—except I am dragged away by violence.

What! not if your father or your mother command

it—*Girl?* said she, intending another word, by her pause and manner before it came out.

Let it come to *that*, Bella; then I shall know what to say. But it shall be from their own mouths, if I do—not from yours, nor your Betty's—And say another word to me, in this manner, and be the consequence what it may, I will force myself into their presence; and demand what I have done to be used thus!

Come along, Child! Come along, Meekness—taking my hand, and leading me towards the door—Demand it of them now—you'll find both your despised parents together!—What! does your heart fail you?—for I resisted, being thus insolently offered to be led, and pulled my hand from her.

I want not to be led, said I; and since I can plead your invitation, I *will* go: and was posting to the stairs accordingly in my passion—but she got between me and the door, and shut it—

Let me first, Bold one, said she, apprize them of your visit—for your own sake let me—for my brother is with them. But yet opening it again, seeing me shrink back—Go, if you will!—Why don't you go?—Why don't you go, Miss?—following me to my closet, whither I retired, with my heart full, and pulled the sash-door after me; and could no longer hold in my tears.

Nor would I answer one word to her repeated aggravations, nor to her demands upon me to open my door (for the key was on the inside); nor so much as turn my head towards her, as she looked through the glass at me. And at last, which vexed her to the heart, I drew the silk curtain, that she should not see me, and down she went muttering all the way.

Is not this usage enough to provoke a rashness never before thought of?

As it is but too probable that I may be hurried away to my uncle's without being able to give you previous notice of it; I beg that as soon as you shall hear of such a violence, you would send to the usual place, to take back such of your letters as may not have reached my hands, or to fetch any of mine that may be there.

May you, my dear, be always happy, prays your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

I have received your four letters. But am in such a ferment, that I cannot at present write to them.

LETTER X

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday Night, March 24.

I HAVE a most provoking letter from my sister. I might have supposed she would resent the contempt she brought upon herself in my chamber. Her conduct surely can only be accounted for by the rage instigated by a supposed rivalry.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

I AM to tell you, that your mother has begged you off for the morrow: but that you have effectually done your business with her, as well as with every body else.

In your proposals and letter to your brother, you have shewn yourself so silly, and so wise; so young, and so old; so gentle, and so obstinate; so meek, and so violent; that never was there so mixed a character.

We all know *of whom* you have borrowed this new spirit. And yet the seeds of it must be in your heart,

or it could not all at once shew itself so rampant. It would be doing Mr. Solmes a spite to wish him such a *shy, un-shy* girl; another of your contradictory qualities —I leave you to make out what I mean by it.

Here, Miss, your mother will not let you remain: she cannot have any peace of mind while such a rebel of a child is so near her. Your aunt Hervey will not take a charge which all the family put together cannot manage. Your uncle Harlowe will not see you at his house, till you are married. So, thanks to your own stubbornness, you have nobody that will receive you but your uncle Antony. Thither you must go in a very few days; and, when there, your brother will settle with you, in my presence, all that relates to your modest challenge; for it is accepted, I assure you. Dr. Lewen will possibly be there, since you make choice of him. *Another* gentleman likewise, were it but to convince you, that he is another sort of man than you have taken him to be. Your two uncles will *possibly* be there too, to see that the *poor*, *weak*, and *defenceless* sister has fair play. So, you see, Miss, what company your smart challenge will draw together.

Prepare for the day. You'll soon be called upon. Adieu, Mamma Norton's *sweet child!*

ARAB. HARLOWE.

I transcribed this letter, and sent it to my mother, with these lines:

A very few words, my ever-honoured Mamma!

IF my sister wrote the enclosed by my father's direction, or yours, I must submit to the usage she gives me in it, with this *only* observation, That it is short of the personal treatment I have received from her. If it be of her own head—why then, Madam

—But I *knew* that when I was banished from your presence—Yet, till I know if she has or has not authority for this usage, I will only write further, that I am

Your *very* unhappy child,
Cl. Harlowe.

This answer I received in an open slip of paper; but it was wet in one place. I kissed the place; for I am sure it was blistered, as I may say, by a mother's tear!—She must (*I hope* she must) have written it reluctantly.

To apply for protection, where authority is defied, is bold. Your sister, who would not in *your* circumstances have been guilty of *your* perverseness, may allowably be angry at you for it. However, we have told her to moderate her *zeal* for our insulted authority. See, if you can deserve another behaviour, than that you complain of: which cannot, however, be so grievous to *you*, as the *cause* of it is to

Your *more* unhappy Mother.

How often must I forbid you any address to me!

Give me, my dearest Miss Howe, your opinion, what I *can*, what I *ought* to do. Not what you would do (pushed as I am pushed) in *resentment* or *passion*—since, so instigated, you tell me, that you should have been with somebody before now—and steps taken in passion hardly ever fail of giving cause for repentance: but acquaint me with what you think cool judgment, and after-reflection, whatever were to be the event, will justify.

I doubt not your *sympathizing* love: but yet you

cannot possibly feel indignity and persecution so very sensibly as the immediate sufferer feels them—are *fitter* therefore to advise me, than I am myself.

I will here rest my cause. Have I, or have I not, suffered or borne enough? And if they will still persevere; if that strange persister against an antipathy so strongly avowed, will *still* persist; say, What *can* I do?—What course pursue?—Shall I fly to London, and endeavour to hide myself from Lovelace, as well as from all my own relations, till my cousin Morden arrives? Or shall I embark for Leghorn in my way to my cousin? Yet, my sex, my youth, considered, how full of danger is this last measure!—And may not my cousin be set out for England, while I am getting thither?—What *can* I do?—Tell me, tell me, my dearest Miss Howe, [for I dare not trust myself,] tell me, what I *can* do.

Eleven o'Clock at Night.

I have been forced to try to compose my angry passions at my harpsichord; having first shut close my doors and windows, that I might not be heard below. As I was closing the shutters of the windows, the distant whooting of the bird of Minerva, as from the often-visited wood-house, gave the subject in that charming Ode to Wisdom, which does honour to our sex, as it was written by one of it. I made an essay, a week ago, to set the three last stanzas of it, as not unsuitable to my unhappy situation; and after I had re-perused the Ode, those were my lesson; and, I am sure, in the solemn address they contain to the All-wise and All-powerful Deity, my heart went with my fingers.

I enclose the Ode, and my effort with it. The subject is solemn; my circumstances are affecting; and I flatter myself, that I have not been quite unhappy in

the performance. If it obtain your approbation, I shall be out of doubt, and should be still more assured, could I hear it tried by *your* voice and finger.

ODE TO WISDOM

By a Lady

I.

The solitary bird of night
Thro' the thick shades now wings his flight,
And quits his time-shook tow'r;
Where, shelter'd from the blaze of day,
In philosophic gloom he lay,
Beneath his ivy bow'r.

II.

With joy I hear the solemn sound,
Which midnight echoes waft around,
And sighing gales repeat.
Fav'rite of Pallas! I attend,
And, faithful to thy summons, bend
At Wisdom's awful seat.

III.

She loves the cool, the silent eve,
Where no false shows of life deceive,
Beneath the lunar ray.
Here folly drops each vain disguise;
Nor sport her gaily colour'd dyes,
As in the beam of day.

IV.

O Pallas! queen of ev'ry art,
That glads the sense, and mends the heart,
Blest source of purer joys!
In ev'ry form of beauty bright,
That captivates the *mental* sight
With pleasure and surprize;

V.

To thy unspotted shrine I bow:
Attend thy modest suppliant's vow,
That breathes no wild desires;

But, taught by thy unerring rules,
To shun the fruitless wish of fools,
To nobler views aspires.

VI.

Not Fortune's gem, Ambition's plume,
Nor Cytherea's fading bloom,
Be objects of my prayer:
Let *av'rice*, *vanity*, and *pride*,
Those envy'd glitt'ring toys divide,
The dull rewards of care.

VII.

To *me* thy *better* gifts impart,
Each moral beauty of the heart,
By studious thought refin'd;
For wealth, the smile of glad content;
For pow'r, its amplest, best extent,
An empire o'er my mind.

VIII.

When *Fortune* drops her gay parade,
When *Pleasure's* transient roses fade,
And wither in the tomb,
Unchang'd is thy immortal prize;
Thy ever-verdant laurels rise
In undecaying bloom.

IX.

By *thee* protected, I defy
The coxcomb's sneer, the stupid lie
Of ignorance and spite:
Alike contemn the leaden fool,
And all the pointed ridicule
Of undiscerning *wit*.

X.

From envy, hurry, noise, and strife,
The dull impertinence of life,
In *thy* retreat I rest:
Pursue thee to the peaceful groves,
Where Plato's sacred spirit roves,
In all thy beauties drest.

XI.

He bad Ilyssus' tuneful stream
Convey thy philosophic theme
Of perfect, fair, and good:
Attentive Athens caught the sound,
And all her list'ning sons around
In awful silence stood.

XII.

Reclaim'd her wild licentious youth,
Confess'd the potent voice of Truth,
And felt its just controul.
The *Passions* ceas'd their loud alarms,
And *Virtue's* soft persuasive charms
O'er all their senses stole.

XIII.

Thy breath inspires the Poet's song
The Patriot's free, unbiass'd tongue,
The Hero's gen'rous strife;
Thine are retirement's silent joys,
And all the sweet engaging ties
Of still, domestic life.

XIV,

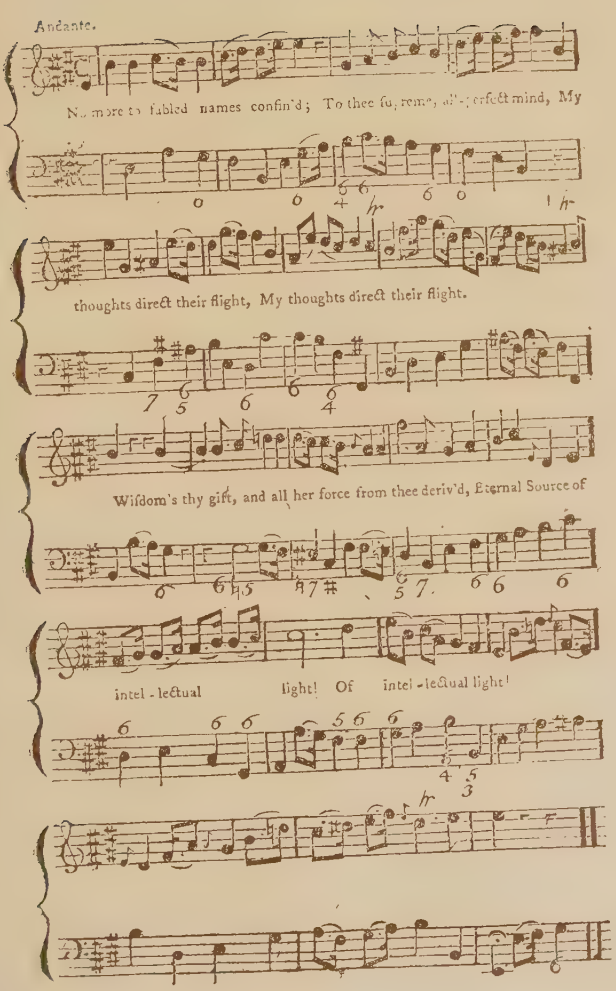
No more to fabled names confin'd;
To Thee supreme, all perfect mind,
My thoughts direct their flight.
Wisdom's thy gift, and all her force
From thee deriv'd, Eternal source
Of Intellectual Light!

XV.

O send her sure, her steady ray,
To regulate my doubtful way,
Thro' life's perplexing road:
The mists of error to controul,
And thro' its gloom direct my soul
To happiness and good.

XVI.

Beneath her clear discerning eye
The visionary shadows fly
Of Folly's painted show.
She sees thro' ev'ry fair disguise,
That all but Virtue's solid joys,
Is vanity and woe.


Andante.
No more to fabled names confin'd; To thee supreme, all-perfect mind, My
thoughts direct their flight, My thoughts direct their flight.
Wisdom's thy gift, and all her force from thee deriv'd, Eternal Source of
intel-lectual light! Of intel-lectual light!

Facsimile of the music to "The Ode to Wisdom" (verse 14).

LETTER XI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday Midnight.

I HAVE now a calmer moment. Envy, ambition, high and selfish resentment, and all the violent passions, are now, most probably, asleep all around me; and shall not my own angry ones give way to the silent hour, and subside likewise?—They *have* given way to it; and I have made use of the gentler space to re-peruse your last letters. I will touch upon some passages in them. And that I may the less endanger the but-just-recovered calm, I will begin with what you write about Mr. Hickman.

Give me leave to say, That I am sorry you cannot yet persuade yourself to think better, that is to say, *more justly*, of that gentleman, than your whimsical picture of him shews you do; or, at least, than the humourousness of your natural vein would make one *think* you do.

I do not imagine, that *you yourself* will say, he sat for the picture you have drawn. And yet, upon the whole, it is not greatly to his disadvantage. Were I at ease in my mind, I would venture to draw a much more amiable and just likeness.

If Mr. Hickman has not that assurance which some men have, he has that humanity and gentleness which many want: and which, with the infinite value he has for you, will make him one of the fittest husbands in the world for a person of your vivacity and spirit.

Although you say I would not like him myself, I do assure you, if Mr. Solmes were such a man as Mr. Hickman, in person, mind, and behaviour, my friends and I had never disagreed about him, if they would

not have permitted me to live single; Mr. Lovelace (having such a character as he has) would have stood no chance with me. This I can the more boldly aver, because I plainly perceive, that of the two passions, *love* and *fear*, this man will be able to inspire one with a much greater proportion of the *latter*, than I imagine is compatible with the *former*, to make a happy marriage.

I am glad you own, that you like no one better than Mr. Hickman. In a little while, I make no doubt, you will be able, if you challenge your heart upon it, to acknowledge, that you like not any man so well: especially, when you come to consider, that the very faults you find in Mr. Hickman, admirably fit him to make *you* happy: that is to say, if it be necessary to your happiness, that you should have *your own will in every thing*.

But let me add one thing: and that is this:—You have such a sprightly turn, that, with your admirable talents, you would make any man in the world, who loved you, look like a fool, except he were such a one as Lovelace.

Forgive me, my dear, for my frankness: and forgive me, also, for so soon returning to subjects so immediately relative to myself, as those I now must touch upon.

You again insist (strengthened by Mr. Lovelace's opinion) upon my *assuming* my own estate [I cannot call it *resuming*, having never been in possession of it]: and I have given you room to expect, that I will consider this subject more closely than I have done before. I must however own, that the reasons which I had to offer against taking your advice were so obvious, that I thought you would have seen them yourself, and been determined by them, against your own hastier counsel.—But since this has not been so, and that both you and Mr. Lovelace call upon me to

assume my own estate, I will enter briefly into the subject.

In the first place, let me ask you, my dear, supposing I were *inclined* to follow your advice, Whom have I to support me in my demand? My uncle Harlowe is one of my trustees—he is against me. My cousin Morden is the other—he is in Italy, and very probably may be set against me too. My brother has declared, that they are resolved to carry their point before he arrives: so that, as they drive on, all will probably be decided before I can have an answer from him, were I to write: and, confined as I am, were the answer to come in time, and they did not like it, they would keep it from me.

In the next place, parents have great advantages in every eye over the child, if she dispute their pleasure in the disposing of her: and so they ought; since out of *twenty* instances, perhaps *two* could not be produced, when *they* were not in the right, the *child* in the wrong.

You would not, I am sure, have me accept of Mr. Lovelace's offered assistance in such a claim. If I would embrace any *other* person's, who else would care to appear for a child against parents, ever, till of late, so affectionate?—But were such a protector to be found, what a length of time would it take up in a course of litigation! The will and the deeds have flaws in them, they say. My brother sometimes talks of going to reside at *The Grove:* I suppose, with a design to make ejectments necessary, were I to offer at assuming; or, were I to marry Mr. Lovelace, in order to give him all the opposition and difficulty the law would help him to give.

These cases I have put to myself, for argument-sake: but they are all out of the question, although any body *were* to be found who would espouse my cause: for I do assure you, I would sooner beg my bread, than

litigate for my right with my father: since I am convinced, that whether the parent do his duty by the child or not, the child cannot be excused from doing hers to him. And to go to law with my *father*, what a sound has that! You will see, that I have mentioned my wish (as an alternative, and as a favour) to be permitted, if I *must* be put out of his house, to go thither: but not one step further can I go. And you see how this is resented.

Upon the whole, then, what have I to hope for, but a change in my father's resolution?—And is there any probability of *that;* such an ascendancy as my brother and sister have obtained over every body; and such an interest to pursue the enmity they have now openly avowed against me?

As to Mr. Lovelace's approbation of your assumption-scheme, I wonder not at. He very probably penetrates the difficulties I should have to bring it to effect, without *his* assistance. Were I to find myself as free as I would wish myself to be, perhaps Mr. Lovelace would stand a worse chance with me than his vanity may permit him to imagine; notwithstanding the pleasure you take in rallying me on his account. How know you, but all that appears to be specious and reasonable in his offers; such as, standing his chance for my favour, after I became *independent*, as I may call it [by which I mean no more, than to have the liberty of refusing for my husband a man whom it hurts me but to think of in that light]; and such as his not visiting me but by my leave; and till Mr. Morden come; and till I am satisfied of his reformation;—How know you, I say, that he gives not himself these airs purely to stand better in *your* graces as well as *mine*, by offering of his own accord conditions which he must needs think would be insisted on, were the case to happen?

Then am I utterly displeased with him. To threaten as he threatens; yet to pretend, that it is not to intimidate me; and to beg of you *not to tell me*, when he must know you *would*, and no doubt *intended* that you *should*, is so meanly artful!—The man must think he has a frighted fool to deal with.—I, to join hands with such a man of violence! my own brother the man whom he threatens!—And what has Mr. Solmes done to him?—Is *he* to be blamed, if he thinks a person would make a wife worth having, to endeavour to obtain her?—Oh that my friends would but leave me to my own way in this one point! For have I given the man encouragement sufficient to ground these threats upon? Were Mr. Solmes a man to whom I could be but *indifferent*, it might be found, that to have the merit of a *sufferer* given him from such a flaming spirit, would very little answer the views of that spirit. It is my fortune to be treated as a fool by my brother: but Mr. Lovelace shall find—Yet I will let *him* know my mind; and then it will come with a better grace to your knowledge.

Mean time, give me leave to tell you, that it goes against me, in my cooler moments, unnatural as my brother is to me, to have you, my dear, who are my other self, write such very severe reflections upon him, in relation to the advantage Lovelace had over him. He is not indeed *your* brother: but remember, that you write to *his* sister.—Upon my word, my dear Miss Howe, you dip your pen in gall whenever you are offended: and I am almost ready to question, when I read some of your expressions against *others* of my relations as well as him, (although *in my favour*,) whether you are so thoroughly warranted by *your own* patience, as you think yourself, to call other people to account for *their* warmth. Should we not be particularly careful to keep clear of the faults we censure?—And

yet I am so angry both at my brother and sister, that I should not have taken this liberty with my dear friend, notwithstanding I know you *never* loved them, had you not made so light of so shocking a transaction, where a brother's life was at stake: when his credit in the eye of the mischievous sex has received a still deeper wound than he *personally* sustained; and when a revival of the same wicked resentments (which may end more fatally) is threatened.

His credit, I say, in the eye of the *mischievous sex:* Who is not warranted to call it so; when it is reckoned among the men such an extraordinary piece of self-conquest (as the two libertines his companions gloried) to resolve never to give a challenge; and among whom duelling is so fashionable a part of brutal bravery, that the man of *temper*, who is, mostly, I believe, the *truly* brave man, is often at a loss so to behave as to avoid incurring either a mortal guilt, or a general contempt?

To enlarge a little upon this subject, May we not infer, that those who would be guilty of throwing these contempts upon a man of temper, who would rather pass by a verbal injury, than to imbrue his hands in blood, know not the measure of true magnanimity? nor how much nobler it is to *forgive*, and even how much more *manly* to *despise*, than to *resent*, an injury? Were I a man, methinks, I should have too much scorn for a person, who could wilfully do me a mean wrong, to put a value upon *his* life, equal to what I put upon *my own*. What an absurdity, because a man had done me a *small* injury, that I should put it in his power (at least, to an *equal* risque) to do me, and those who love me, an irreparable one!—Were it not a *wilful* injury, nor *avowed* to be so, there could not be *room* for resentment.

How willingly would I run away from myself,

and what most concerns myself, if I could! This digression brings me back again to the occasion of it—and that to the impatience I was in, when I ended my last letter, for my situation is not altered. I renew, therefore, my former earnestness, as the new day approaches, and will bring with it perhaps new trials, that you will (as undivestedly as possible of favour or resentment) tell me what you would have me do:—for, if I am obliged to go to my uncle Antony's, all, I doubt, will be over with me. Yet how to avoid it—that's the difficulty!

I shall deposit this the first thing. When you have it, lose no time, I pray you, to advise (lest it be too late)

Your ever obliged
Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Saturday, March 25.

What *can* I advise you to do, my noble creature? Your merit is your crime. You can no more change *your* nature, than your persecutors can *theirs*. Your distress is owing to the vast disparity between you and them. What would you have of them? Do they not act in character?—And to whom? To an alien. You are not one of them. They have two dependencies in their hope to move you to compliance.—Upon their *impenetrableness* one [I'd give it a more proper name, if I dared]; the other, on the regard you have always had for your *character*, [Have they not heretofore owned as much?] and upon your apprehensions from *that* of Lovelace, which would

discredit you, should you take any step by his means to extricate yourself. Then they know, that resentment and unpersuadableness are not natural to you; and that the anger they have wrought you up to, will subside, as all *extraordinaries* soon do; and that once married, you will make the best of it.

But surely your *father*'s son and eldest daughter have a view (by communicating to so narrow a soul all they know of your just aversion to him) to entail unhappiness for life upon you, were you to have the man who is already more nearly related to them, than ever he can be to you, although the shocking compulsion should take place.

As to that wretch's perseverance, those only, who know not the man, will wonder at it. He has not the least delicacy. His principal view in marriage is not to the mind. How shall those beauties be valued, which cannot be comprehended? Were you to be his, and shew a visible want of tenderness to him, it is my opinion, he would not be much concerned at it. I have heard you well observe, from your Mrs. Norton, That a person who has any *over-ruling* passion, will compound by giving up twenty *secondary* or *under-satisfactions*, though more laudable ones, in order to have *that* gratified.

I'll give you the substance of a conversation [no fear you can be made to like him worse than you do already] that passed between Sir Harry Downeton and this Solmes, but three days ago, as Sir Harry told it but yesterday to my mother and me. It will confirm to you that what your sister's insolent Betty reported he should say, of governing by *fear*, was not of her own head.

Sir Harry told her, he wondered he should wish to obtain you so much against your inclination as every body knew it would be, if he did.

He matter'd not that, he said: coy maids made the fondest wives: [A sorry fellow!] It would not at all grieve him to see a pretty woman make wry faces, if she gave him cause to vex her. And your estate, by the convenience of its situation, would richly pay him for all he could bear with your shyness.

He should be sure, he said, after a while, of your complaisance, if not of your love: and in that should be happier than nine parts in ten of his married acquaintance.

What a wretch is this!

For the rest, your known virtue would be as great a security to him, as he could wish for.

She will look upon you, said Sir Harry, if she be forced to marry you, as Elizabeth of France did upon Philip II. of Spain, when he received her on his frontiers as her husband, who *was* to have been but her father-in-law: that is, with fear and terror, rather than with complaisance and love: and you will perhaps be as surly to her, as that old monarch was to *his* young bride.

Fear and terror, the wretch, the horrid wretch! said, looked pretty in a bride as well as in a wife: and, laughing, [yes, my dear, the hideous fellow laughed immoderately, as Sir Harry told us, when he said it,] it should be his care to perpetuate the occasion for that fear, if he could not think he had the *love*. And, truly, he was of opinion, that if LOVE and FEAR must be separated in matrimony, the man who made himself *feared*, fared best.

If my eyes would carry with them the execution which the eyes of the basilisk are said to do, I would make it my first business to *see* this creature.

My mother, however, says, it would be a prodigious merit in you, if you could get over your aversion to him. Where, asks she [as you have been asked

before], is the praise-worthiness of obedience, if it be only paid in instances where we give up nothing?

What a fatality, that you have no better an option—either a *Scylla* or a *Charybdis*.

Were it not you, I should know how (barbarously used as you are used) to advise you in a moment. But such a noble character to suffer from a (supposed) rashness and indiscretion of such a nature, would, as I have heretofore observed, be a wound to the sex.

While I was in hope, that the asserting of your own independence would have helped you, I was pleased, that you had *one* resource, as I thought. But now, that you have so well proved, that such a step would not avail you, I am entirely at a loss what to say.

I will lay down my pen, and think.

I have considered, and considered again; but, I protest, I know no more what to say now, than before. Only this: That I am young, like yourself; and have a much weaker judgment, and stronger passions, than you have.

I have heretofore said, that you have offered as much as you ought, in offering to live single. If you were never to marry, the estate they are so loth should go out of their name, would, in time, I suppose, revert to your brother: and *he* or *his* would have it, perhaps, much more certainly this way, than by the precarious reversions which Solmes makes them hope for. Have you put this into their odd heads, my dear?—The tyrant word AUTHORITY, as they use it, can be the only objection against this offer.

One thing you must consider, that, if you leave your parents, your duty and love will not suffer you to justify yourself by an appeal against them; and so you'll have the world against you. And should Lovelace con-

tinue his wild life, and behave ungratefully to you, will not his baseness seem to justify their cruel treatment of *you*, as well as their dislike of *him?*

May heaven direct you for the best!—I can only say, that, for my own part, I would do any thing, go any where, rather than be compelled to marry the man I hate; and (were he such a man as Solmes) must always hate. Nor could I have borne what you have borne, if from father and uncles, not from brother and sister.

My mother will have it, that after they have tried their utmost efforts to bring you into their measures, and find them ineffectual, they will recede. But I cannot say I am of her mind. She does not own, she has any other authority for this, but her own conjecture. I should otherwise have hoped, that your uncle Antony and she had been in one secret, and that favourable to you. Woe be to one of them at least [to your uncle to be sure I mean] if they should be in *any other!*

You must, if possible, avoid being carried to that uncle's. The man, the parson, your brother and sister present!—They'll certainly there marry you to the wretch. Nor will your newly-raised spirit support you in your resistance on such an occasion. Your meekness will return; and you will have nothing for it but tears [tears despised by them all] and ineffectual appeals and lamentations: and these tears when the ceremony is *profaned*, you must suddenly dry up; and endeavour to dispose yourself to such an humble frame of mind, as may induce your new-made lord to forgive all your past declarations of aversion.

In short, my dear, you must then blandish him over with a confession, that all your past behaviour was maidenly reserve only: and it will be *your* part to convince him of the truth of his impudent sarcasm, *that the coyest maids make the fondest wives*. Thus will you

enter the state with a high sense of obligation to his *forgiving goodness:* and if you will not be kept to it by that *fear*, by which he proposes to govern, I am much mistaken.

Yet, after all, I must leave the point undetermined, and only to be determined, as you find they recede from their avowed purpose, or resolve to remove you to your uncle Antony's. But I must repeat my wishes, that something may fall out, that *neither* of these men may call you *his!*—And may you live single, my dearest friend, till some man shall offer, that may be as worthy of you, as man *can* be!

But yet, methinks, I would not, that you, who are so admirably qualified to adorn the married state, should be always single. You know I am incapable of flattery; and that I always speak and write the sincerest dictates of my heart. Nor can you, from what you must know of your own merit (taken only in a comparative light with others) doubt my sincerity. For why should a person who delights to find out and admire every thing that is praise-worthy in *another*, be supposed ignorant of like perfections in *herself*, when she could not so much admire them *in* another, if she had them *not* herself? And why may not I give *her* those praises, which she would give to any other, who had but half of her excellencies?—Especially when she is incapable of pride and vain-glory; and neither despises *others* for the want of her fine qualities, nor overvalues *herself* upon them? —*Over*-values, did I say!—How can that be?

Forgive me, my beloved friend. My admiration of you (increased, as it is, by every letter you write) will not always be held down in silence; although, in order to avoid offending you, I generally endeavour to keep it from flowing to my pen, when I write to you, or to my lips, whenever I have the happiness to be in your company.

I will add nothing (though I could an hundred things on account of your latest communications) but that I am

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

I hope I have pleased you with my dispatch. I wish I had been able to please you with my requested advice.

You have given new beauties to the charming Ode which you have transmitted to me. What pity that the wretches you have to deal with, put you out of your admirable course; in the pursuit of which, like the sun, you was wont to cheer and illuminate all you shone upon!

LETTER XIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Sunday Morning, March 26.

How soothing a thing is praise from those we love! —Whether conscious or not of deserving it, it cannot but give us great delight, to see ourselves stand high in the opinion of those whose favour we are ambitious to cultivate. An ingenuous mind will make this farther use of it, that if he be sensible that it does not *already* deserve the charming attributes, it will hasten (before its friend finds herself mistaken) to obtain the graces it is complimented for: and this it will do, as well in honour to itself, as to preserve its friend's opinion, and justify her judgment. May this be always my aim!— And then you will not only give the *praise*, but the *merit*; and I shall be more worthy of that friendship, which is the only pleasure I have to boast of.

Most heartily I thank you for the kind dispatch of your last favour. How much am I indebted to you! and even to your honest servant!—Under what obligations does my unhappy situation lay me!

But let me answer the kind contents of it, as well as I may.

As to getting over my disgusts to Mr. Solmes, it is impossible to be done; while he wants generosity, frankness of heart, benevolence, manners and every qualification that distinguishes the worthy man. O my dear! what a degree of patience, what a greatness of soul, is required in the wife, not to despise a husband who is more ignorant, more illiterate, more low-minded than herself!—The wretch, vested with prerogatives, who will claim rule in virtue of them (and not to *permit* whose claim, will be as disgraceful to the *prescribing* wife as to the *governed* husband); How shall such a husband as this be borne, were he, for reasons of *convenience* and *interest*, even to be our CHOICE? But, to be compelled to have such a one, and that compulsion to arise from motives as unworthy of the *prescribers* as of the *prescribed*, who can think of getting over an aversion so justly founded? How much easier to bear the *temporary* persecutions I labour under, *because* temporary, than to resolve to be *such* a man's for *life?* Were I to comply, must I not leave my relations, and go to him? *A month* will decide the one, perhaps: But what a *duration of woe* will the other be!—Every day, it is likely, rising to witness to some new breach of an altar-vowed duty!

Then, my dear, the man seems already to be meditating vengeance against me for an aversion I cannot help: for yesterday my saucy gaoleress assured me, that all my oppositions would not signify that *pinch of snuff*, holding out her genteel finger and thumb: that I *must* have Mr. Solmes: that therefore I had not best

carry my jest too far; for that Mr. Solmes was a man of spirit, and had told HER, that as I should surely be his, I acted very *unpolitely;* since, if he had not more *mercy* [that was *her* word, I know not if it were *his*] than I had, I might have cause to repent the usage I gave him to the last day of my life. But enough of this man; who, by what you repeat from Sir Harry Downeton, has all the insolence of his sex, without any one quality to make that insolence tolerable.

I have received two letters from Mr. Lovelace, since his visit to you; which make three that I have not answered. I doubt not his being very uneasy; but in his last he complains in high terms of my silence; not in the still small voice, or rather style of an humble lover, but in a style like that which would probably be used by a slighted protector. And his pride is again touched, that like a *thief*, or *eves-dropper*, he is forced to dodge about in hopes of a letter, and returns five miles (and then to an inconvenient lodging) without any.

His letters and the copy of mine to him, shall soon attend you. Till when, I will give you the substance of what I wrote him yesterday.

I take him severely to task for his freedom in threatening me, through you, with a visit to Mr. Solmes, or to my brother. I say, 'That, surely, I must be thought to be a creature fit to bear *any thing;* that violence and menaces from some of my *own family* are not enough for me to bear, in order to make me avoid *him;* but that I must have them from *him* too, if I oblige those to whom it is both my *inclination* and *duty* to oblige in every thing that is reasonable, and in my power.

'Very extraordinary, I tell him, that a violent spirit shall threaten to do a rash and unjustifiable thing, which concerns *me* but a little, and himself a great deal, if I

do not something *as* rash, my character and sex considered, to divert him from it.

'I even hint, that, however it would affect *me*, were any mischief to happen on my account, yet there are persons, as far as I know, who in my case would not think there would be reason for *much* regret, were such a committed rashness as he threatens Mr. Solmes with, to rid her of *two* persons whom, had she never known, she had never been unhappy.'

This is plain-dealing, my dear: and I suppose he will put it into still plainer English for me.

I take his pride to task, on his disdaining to watch for my letters; and for his *eves-dropping* language: and say, 'That, surely, he has the less reason to think so hardly of his situation; since his faulty morals are the cause of all; and since faulty morals deservedly level all distinction, and bring down rank and birth to the *canaille*, and to the necessity which he so much regrets, of appearing (if I must descend to his language) as an *eves-dropper* and a *thief*. And then I forbid him ever to expect another letter from me that is to subject him to such disgraceful hardships.

'As to the solemn vows and protestations he is so ready, upon all occasions, to make, they have the less weight with me, I tell him, as they give a kind of demonstration, that he himself, from his own character, thinks there is *reason* to make them. *Deeds* are to me the only evidence of *intentions*. And I am more and more convinced of the necessity of breaking off a correspondence with a person, whose addresses I see it is impossible either to expect my friends to encourage, or him to appear to wish that they should think him worthy of encouragement.

'What therefore I repeatedly desire is, That since his birth, alliances, and expectations, are such as will at any time, if his immoral character be not an

objection, procure him at least equal advantages in a woman whose taste and inclinations moreover might be better adapted to his own; I insist upon it, as well as advise it, that he give up all thoughts of me: and the rather, as he has all along (by his threatening and unpolite behaviour to my friends, and whenever he speaks of them) given me reason to conclude, that there is more malice in *them*, than regard to *me*, in his perseverance.'

This is the substance of the letter I have written to him.

The man, to be sure, must have the penetration to observe, that my correspondence with him hitherto is owing more to the severity I meet with, than to a very high value for him. And so I would have him think. What a *worse* than moloch deity is that, which expects an offering of reason, duty, and discretion, to be made to its shrine!

Your mother is of opinion, you say, that *at last* my friends will relent. Heaven grant that they may!—But my brother and sister have such an influence over every body, and are so determined; so pique themselves upon subduing me, and carrying their point; that I despair that they will. And yet, if they do not, I frankly own, I would not scruple to throw myself upon any not disreputable protection, by which I might avoid my present persecutions, on one hand, and not give Mr. Lovelace advantage over me, on the other—that is to say, were there manifestly *no other* way left me: for, if there *were*, I should think the leaving my father's house, without his consent, one of the most inexcusable actions I could be guilty of, were the protection to be ever so unexceptionable; and this notwithstanding the independent fortune willed me by my grandfather. And indeed I have often reflected with a degree of indignation and disdain, upon the thoughts of what a

low, selfish creature that child must be, who is to be reined in only by the hopes of what a parent can or will do for her.

But notwithstanding all this, I owe it to the sincerity of friendship to confess, that I know not what I *should* have done, had your advice been conclusive any way. Had you, my dear, been witness to my different emotions, as I read your letter, when, in one place, you advise me of my danger, if I am carried to my uncle's; in another, when you own you could not bear what I bear, and would do any thing rather than marry the man you hate; yet, in another, represent to me my reputation suffering in the world's eye; and the necessity I should be under to justify my conduct, at the expense of my friends, were I to take a rash step; in another, insinuate the *dishonest* figure I should be forced to make, in so compelled a matrimony; endeavouring to cajole, fawn upon, and play the hypocrite with a man to whom I have an aversion; who would have reason to *believe* me an hypocrite, as well from my former avowals, as from the sense he *must* have (if common sense he has) of his own demerits; the necessity you think there would be for me, the more averse I really was, to seem the fonder of him; a fondness (were I capable of so much dissimulation) that would be imputable to disgraceful motives; as it would be too visible, that love, either of person or mind, could be neither of them: then his undoubted, his even constitutional narrowness: his too probable jealousy, and unforgiveness, bearing in my mind my declared aversion, and the unfeigned despights I took all opportunities to do him, in order to discourage his address: a preference avowed against him from the *same* motive; with the pride he professes to take in curbing and sinking the spirits of a woman he had acquired a right to tyrannize over: had you, I say, been witness of my different

emotions as I read; now leaning this way, now that; now perplexed; now apprehensive; now angry at one, then at another; now resolving; now doubting; you would have seen the power you have over me; and would have had reason to believe, that, had you given your advice in any determined or positive manner, I had been ready to have been concluded by it. So, my dear, you will find, from these acknowledgments, that you must justify me to those laws of friendship, which require undisguised frankness of heart; although your justification of me in that particular, will perhaps be at the expense of my prudence.

But, upon the whole, this I do repeat—That nothing but the *last* extremity shall make me abandon my father's house, if they will permit me to stay; and if I can, by any means, by any honest pretences, but keep off my evil destiny in it till my cousin Morden arrives. As one of my trustees, *his* is a protection, into which I may without discredit throw myself, if my other friends should remain determined. And this (although they seem too well aware of it) is all my hope: for, as to Lovelace, were I to be sure of his tenderness, and even of his reformation, must not the thoughts of embracing the offered protection of his family, be the same thing, in the world's eye, as accepting of his own?—Could I avoid receiving his visits at his own relations'? Must I not be his, whatever, (on seeing him in a *nearer* light,) I should find him out to be? For you know, it has always been my observation, that very few people in courtship see each other as they are. Oh! my dear! how wise have I endeavoured to be! How anxious to choose, and to avoid every thing, *precautiously*, as I may say, that might make me happy, or unhappy; yet all my wisdom now, by a strange fatality, is likely to become foolishness!

Then you tell me, in your usual kindly-partial

manner, what is expected of *me*, more than would be of some others. This should be a lesson to me. Whatever my motives were, the world would not know them. To complain of a brother's unkindness, *that*, indeed, I might do. Differences between brothers and sisters, where interests clash, but too commonly arise: but, where the severe father cannot be separated from the faulty brother, who could bear to lighten herself, by loading a father?—Then, in this particular case, must not the hatred Mr. Lovelace expresses to every one of my family (although in return for *their* hatred of *him*) shock one extremely? Must it not shew, that there is something implacable, as well as highly unpolite in his temper?—And what creature can think of marrying so as to be out of all hopes ever to be well with her own nearest and tenderest relations?

But here, having tired myself, and I dare say you, I will lay down my pen.

Mr. Solmes is almost continually here: so is my aunt Hervey: so are my two uncles. Something is working against me, I doubt. What an uneasy state is suspense!—When a naked sword, too, seems hanging over one's head!

I hear nothing but what this confident creature Betty throws out in the wantonness of office. Now it is, Why, Miss, don't you look up your things? You'll be called upon, depend upon it, before you are aware. Another time she intimates darkly, and in broken sentences, (as if on purpose to tease me,) what *one* says, what *another*; with their inquiries how I dispose of my time? And my brother's insolent question comes frequently in, Whether I am not writing a history of my sufferings?

But I am now used to her pertness: and as it is only

through that that I can hear of any thing intended against me, before it is to be put in execution; and as, when she is most impertinent, she pleads a commission for it; I bear with her: yet, now-and-then, not without a little of the heart-burn.

I will deposit thus far. Adieu, my dear.

Cl. Harlowe.

Written on the cover, after she went down, with a pencil:

On coming down, I found your second letter of yesterday's date.* I have read it; and am in hopes that the enclosed will in a great measure answer your mother's expectations of me.

My most respectful acknowledgments to her for it, and for her very kind admonitions.

You'll read to her what you please of the enclosed.

LETTER XIV

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Sat. March 25.

I follow my last of this date by command. I mentioned in my former my mother's opinion of the merit you would have, if you could oblige your friends against your own inclination. Our conference upon this subject was introduced by the conversation we had had with Sir Harry Downeton; and my mother thinks it of so much importance, that she enjoins me to give you the particulars of it. I the rather comply, as I was unable in my last to tell what to advise you to; and as you will in this recital have my mother's opinion at

* See the next Letter.

least, and, perhaps, in *hers* what the *world*'s would be, were it only to know what she knows, and not so much as I know.

My mother argues upon this case in a most discouraging manner for all such of our sex as look forward for happiness in marriage with the *man of their choice*.

Only, that I know, she has a side-view of her daughter; who, at the same time that she now prefers no one to another, values not the man her mother most regards, of one farthing; or I should lay it more to heart.

What is there in it, says she, that all this bustle is about? Is it such a mighty matter for a young woman to give up her inclinations to oblige her friends?

Very well, my mamma, thought I! Now, may you ask this—at FORTY, you may. But what would you have said at EIGHTEEN, is the question?

Either, said she, the lady must be thought to have very violent inclinations [And what nice young creature would have that supposed?] which she *could* not give up; or a very stubborn will, which she *would* not; or, thirdly, have parents she was indifferent about obliging.

You know my mother now-and-then argues very notably; always very warmly at least. I happen often to differ from her; and we both think so well of our own arguments, that we very seldom are so happy as to convince one another. A pretty common case, I believe, in all *vehement* debatings. She says, I am *too witty*; Anglicè, *too pert*: I, That she is *too wise*; that is to say, being likewise put into English, *not so young as she has been*: in short, is grown so much into *mother*, that she has forgotten she ever was a *daughter*. So, generally, we call another cause by consent—yet fall into the old one half a dozen times over, *without* consent—quitting and resuming, with half-angry faces,

forced into a smile, that there might be some room to piece together again: but go to-bed, if bed-time, a little sullen nevertheless: or, if we speak, her silence is broken with an Ah! Nancy! You are so lively! so quick! I wish you were less like your papa, child!

I pay it off with thinking, that my mother has no reason to disclaim *her* share in her Nancy: and if the matter go off with greater severity on her side than I wish for, then her favourite Hickman fares the worse for it next day.

I know I am a saucy creature. I know, if I do not *say* so, you will *think* so. So no more of this just now. What I mention it for, is to tell you, that on this serious occasion I will omit, if I can, all that passed between us, that had an air of flippancy on my part, or quickness on my mother's, to let you into the *cool* and *cogent* of the conversation.

'Look through the families, said she, which we both know, where the man and the woman have been said to marry for love; which (at the time it is so called) is perhaps no more than a passion begun in folly or thoughtlessness, and carried on from a spirit of perverseness and opposition [here we had a parenthetical debate, which I omit]; and see, if they appear to be happier than those whose principal inducement to marry has been convenience, or to oblige their friends; or even whether they are generally *so* happy: for *convenience* and *duty*, where observed, will afford a *permanent* and even an *increasing* satisfaction (as well at the time, as upon the reflection) which seldom fail to reward themselves: while *love*, if love *be* the motive, is an idle passion' [*idle in* ONE SENSE *my mother cannot say; for love is as busy as a monkey, and as mischievous as a school-boy*]—'it is a *fervour*, that, like all other *fervours*, lasts but a little while after marriage; a bow overstrained, that soon returns to its natural bent.

'As it is founded generally upon mere *notional* excellencies, which were unknown to the persons themselves till attributed to either by the other; one, two, or three months, usually sets all right on both sides; and then with opened eyes they think of each other—just as everybody else thought of them before.

'The lovers *imaginaries* [her own notable word!] are by that time gone off; nature and old habits (painfully dispensed with or concealed) return: disguises thrown aside, all the moles, freckles, and defects in the minds of *each* discover themselves; and 'tis well if each do not sink in the opinion of the other, as much below the common standard, as the blinded imagination of both had set them above it. And now, said she, the fond pair, who knew no felicity out of each other's company, are so far from finding the never-ending variety each had proposed in an unrestrained conversation with the other (when they seldom were together; and always parted with something *to say*; or, on recollection, when parted, wishing they *had* said); that they are continually on the wing in pursuit of amusements out of themselves; and those, concluded my sage mamma, [Did you think her wisdom so *very* modern?] will perhaps be the livelier to each, in which the other has no share.'

I told my mother, that if *you* were to take any rash step, it would be owing to the indiscreet violence of your friends. I was afraid, I said, that these reflections upon the conduct of people in the married state, who might set out with better hopes, were but too well grounded: but that this must be allowed me, that if children weighed not these matters so thoroughly as they ought, neither did parents make those allowances for youth, inclination, and inexperience, which had been found necessary to be made for themselves at their children's time of life.

I remembered a letter, I told her, hereupon, which you wrote a few months ago, personating an anonymous elderly lady (in Mr. Wyerley's day of plaguing you) to Miss Drayton's mother, who, by her severity and restraints, had like to have driven the young lady into the very fault against which her mother was most solicitous to guard her. And I dared to say, she would be pleased with it.

I fetched the first draught of it, which at my request you obliged me at the time; and read the whole letter to my mother. But the following passage she made me read twice. I think you once told me you had not a copy of this letter.

'Permit me, Madam, [says the personated grave writer,] to observe, That if persons of your experience would have young people look *forward*, in order to be wiser and better by their advice, it would be kind in them to look *backward*, and allow for their children's youth, and natural vivacity; in other words, for their lively hopes, unabated by time, unaccompanied by reflection, and unchecked by disappointment. Things appear to us all in a very different light at our entrance upon a favourite party, or tour; when, with golden prospects, and high expectations, we rise vigorous and fresh like the sun beginning its morning course; from what they do, when we sit down at the end of our views, tired, and preparing for our journey homeward: for then we take into our *reflection*, what we had left out in *prospect*, the fatigues, the checks, the hazards, we had met with; and make a true estimate of pleasures, which from our raised expectations must necessarily have fallen miserably short of what we had promised ourselves at setting out. Nothing but experience can give us a strong and efficacious conviction of this difference: and when we would inculcate the fruits of *that* upon the minds of those we love, who have not lived long

enough to find those fruits; and would hope, that our *advice* should have as much force upon *them*, as *experience* has upon *us*; and which, perhaps, *our* parents' advice had not upon *ourselves*, at our daughters' time of life; should we not proceed by patient reasoning and gentleness, that we may not harden, where we would convince? For, Madam, the tenderest and most generous minds, when harshly treated, become generally the most inflexible. If the young lady knows her *heart* to be right, however defective her *head* may be for want of age and experience, she will be apt to be very tenacious. And if she believes her friends to be wrong, although perhaps they may be only so in their methods of treating her, how much will every *unkind* circumstance on the parent's part, or *heedless* one on the child's, though ever so slight in itself, widen the difference! The parent's *prejudice* in disfavour, will confirm the daughter's in favour, of the same person; and the best reasonings in the world on either side, will be attributed to that prejudice. In short, neither of them will be convinced: a perpetual opposition ensues: the parent grows impatient; the child desperate: and, as a too natural consequence, that falls out which the mother was most afraid of, and which possibly had not happened, if the child's passions had been only *led*, not *driven*.'

My mother was pleased with the whole letter; and said, It *deserved* to have the success it met with. But asked me what excuse could be offered for a young lady capable of making such reflections (and who at her time of life could so well assume the character of one of riper years) if she should rush into any fatal mistake herself?

She then touched upon the moral character of Mr. Lovelace; and how reasonable the aversion of your relations is to a man who gives himself the liberties he

is said to take; and who indeed himself denies not the accusation; having been heard to declare, that he will do all the mischief he can to the sex, in revenge for the ill usage and broken vows of his first love, at a time when he was *too young* [his own expression it seems] to be insincere.

I replied, that I had heard every one say, that the lady meant really used him ill; that it affected him so much at the time, that he was forced to travel upon it; and to drive her out of his heart, ran into courses which he had ingenuousness enough himself to condemn: that, however, he had denied that he had thrown out such menaces against the sex when charged with them by me in your presence; and declared himself incapable of so unjust and ungenerous a resentment against *all*, for the perfidy of *one*.

You remember this, my dear, as I do your innocent observation upon it, that you could believe his solemn asseveration and denial: 'For surely, said you, the man who would resent, as the highest indignity that could be offered to a gentleman, the imputation of a *wilful* falsehood, would not be guilty of one.'

I insisted upon the extraordinary circumstances in your case; particularizing them. I took notice, that Mr. Lovelace's morals were at one time no objection with your relations for Arabella: that then much was built upon his family, and more upon his parts and learning, which made it out of doubt, that he might be reclaimed by a woman of virtue and prudence: and [pray forgive me for mentioning it] I ventured to add, that although your family might be good sort of folks, as the world went, yet no body but you imputed to any of them a *very* punctilious concern for religion or piety —therefore were they the less entitled to object to defects of that kind in others. Then, what an odious man, said I, have they picked out, to supplant in a

lady's affections one of the finest figures of a man, and one noted for his brilliant parts, and other accomplishments, whatever his morals may be!

Still my mother insisted, that there was the greater merit in your obedience on that account; and urged, that there hardly ever was a very handsome and a very sprightly man who made a tender and affectionate husband: for that they were generally such Narcissus's, as to imagine every woman ought to think as highly of them, as they did of themselves.

There was no danger from that consideration *here*, I said, because the lady had still greater advantages both of person and mind, than the man; graceful and elegant, as he must be allowed to be, beyond most of his sex.

She cannot endure to hear me praise any man but her favourite Hickman; upon whom, nevertheless, she generally brings a degree of contempt which he would escape, did she not lessen the little merit he has, by giving him, on all occasions, more than I think he can deserve, and entering him into comparisons in which it is impossible but he must be a sufferer. And now [preposterous partiality!] she thought for *her* part, that Mr. Hickman, bating that his *face* indeed was not so smooth, nor his complexion quite so good, and saving that he was not so presuming and so bold (which ought to be no fault with a modest woman) equalled Mr. Lovelace *at any hour of the day*.

To avoid entering further into such an *incomparable* comparison, I said, I did not believe, had they left you to your own way, and treated you generously, that you would have had the thought of encouraging any man whom they disliked—

Then, Nancy, catching me up, the excuse is less—for if so, must there not be more of *contradiction*, than *love*, in the case?

Not so, neither, Madam: for I know Miss Clarissa

Harlowe would prefer Mr. Lovelace to all men, if morals—

IF, Nancy!—That *if* is every thing.—Do you really think she loves Mr. Lovelace?

What would you have had me say, my dear?—I won't tell you what I *did* say: But, had I *not* said what I *did*, who would have believed me?

Besides, I *know* you love him!—Excuse me, my dear: Yet, if you deny it, what do you but reflect upon yourself, as if you thought you *ought not* to allow yourself in what you cannot help doing?

Indeed, Madam, said I, the man is worthy of any woman's love [*if*, again, I *could* say]—But her parents—

Her parents, Nancy—[You know, my dear, how my mother, who accuses her daughter of quickness, is evermore interrupting one!]

May take wrong measures, said I—

Cannot do wrong—they have reason, I'll warrant, said she—

By which they may provoke a young woman, said I, to do rash things, which otherwise she would not do.

But, if it *be* a rash thing, [returned she,] should she do it? A prudent daughter will not wilfully err, because her parents err, if they *were* to err: if she *do*, the world which blames the parents, will not acquit the child. All that can be said, in extenuation of a daughter's error in this case, arises from a kind consideration, which Miss Clary's letter to Lady Drayton pleads for, to be paid to *her* daughter's youth and inexperience. And will such an admirable young person as Miss Clarissa Harlowe, whose prudence, as we see, qualifies her to be an adviser of persons much older than herself, take shelter under so poor a covert?

Let her know, Nancy, out of hand, what I say; and I charge you to represent farther to her, That let her dislike one man and approve of another ever so much,

it will be expected of a young lady of her unbounded generosity and greatness of mind, that she should *deny herself* when she can *oblige all her family* by so doing—no less than ten or a dozen perhaps the nearest and dearest to her of all the persons in the world, an indulgent father and mother at the head of them. It may be *fancy* only on her side; but parents look deeper: And will not Miss Clarissa Harlowe give up her *fancy* to her parents' *judgment?*

I said a great deal upon this *judgment* subject: all that you could wish I should say; and all that your extraordinary case allowed me to say. And my mother was so sensible of the force of it, that she charged me not to write to you any part of my answer to what she said; but only what she herself had advanced; lest, in so critical a case, it should induce you to take measures which might give us both reason (me for giving it, you for following it) to repent it as long as we lived.

And thus, my dear, have I set my mother's arguments before you. And the rather, as I cannot myself tell what to advise you to do—you know best your own heart; and what that will let you do.

Robin undertakes to deposit this very early, that you may have an opportunity to receive it by your first morning airing.

Heaven guide and direct you for the best, is the incessant prayer of

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Sunday Afternoon.

I AM in great apprehensions. Yet cannot help repeating my humble thanks to your mother and you for your last favour. I hope her kind end is answered by the contents of my last. Yet I must not think it enough to acknowledge her goodness to me, with a pencil only, on the cover of a letter sealed up. A few lines give me leave to write with regard to my anonymous letter to Lady Drayton. If I did *not* at that time tell you, as I believe I *did*, that my excellent Mrs. Norton gave me her assistance in that letter, I now acknowledge that she did.

Pray let your mother know this, for two reasons: one, that I may not be thought to arrogate to myself a discretion which does not belong to me; the other, that I may not suffer by the severe, but just inference she was pleased to draw; *doubling* my faults upon me, if I myself should act unworthy of the advice I was supposed to give.

Before I come to what most nearly affects me, I must chide you once more, for the severe, the *very* severe things you mention of our family, to the disparagement of their MORALS. Indeed, my dear, I wonder at you!—A slighter occasion might have passed me, after I have written to you so often to so little purpose, on this topic. But, affecting as my own circumstances are, I cannot pass by, without animadversion, the reflection I need not repeat in words.

There is not a worthier woman in England than my mother. Nor is my father that man you sometimes make him. Excepting in one point, I know not any

family which lives more up to their duty, than the principals of ours. A little too *uncommunicative* for their great circumstances—that is all.—Why, then, have they not reason to insist upon unexceptionable morals in a man whose sought-for relationship to them, by a marriage in their family, they have certainly a right either to allow of, or to disallow.

Another line or two, before I am engrossed by my own concerns—upon your treatment of Mr. Hickman. Is it, do you think, generous to revenge upon an innocent person, the displeasure you receive from another quarter, where, I doubt, you are a trespasser too?—But one thing I could tell him; and you had not best provoke me to it: It is this, That no woman uses ill the man she does not absolutely reject, but she has it in her heart to make him amends, when her tyranny has had its run, and he has completed the measure of his services and patience. My mind is not enough at ease to push this matter further.

I will now give you the occasion of my present apprehensions.

I had reason to fear, as I mentioned in mine of this morning, that a storm was brewing. Mr. Solmes came home from church this afternoon with my brother. Soon after, Betty brought me up a letter, without saying from whom. It was in a cover, and directed by a hand I never saw before; as if it were supposed that I would not receive and open it, had I known from whom it came.

These are the contents:

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Sunday, March 26.

DEAREST MADAM,

I think myself a most unhappy man, in that I have never yet been able to pay my respects to you with youre consent, for one halfe-hour. I have something to communicat to you that concernes you much, if you be pleased to admit me to youre speech. Youre honour is concerned in it, and the honour of all youre familly. It relates to the designes of one whom you are sed to valew more than he desarves; and to some of his reprobat actions; which I am reddie to give you convincing proofes of the truth of. I may appear to be interested in it: but, neverthelesse, I am reddie to make oathe, that every tittle is true: and you will see what a man you are sed to favour. But I hope not so, for your owne honour.

Pray, Madam, vouchsafe me a hearing, as you valew your honour and familly: which will oblidge, dearest Miss,

Your most humble and most faithful servant,

ROGER SOLMES.

I waite below *for* the hope of admittance.

I have no manner of doubt, that this is a poor device to get this man into my company. I would have sent down a verbal answer; but Betty refused to carry any message, which should prohibit his visiting me. So I was obliged either to see him, or to write to him. I wrote therefore an answer, of which I shall send you the rough draught. And now my heart aches for what may follow from it; for I hear a great hurry below.

TO ROGER SOLMES, ESQ.

SIR,

Whatever you have to communicate to me, which concerns my honour, may as well be done by writing as by word of mouth. If Mr. Lovelace is any of *my* concern, I know not that *therefore* he ought to be *yours:* for the usage I receive on *your* account [I *must* think it so!] is so harsh, that were there not such a man in the world as Mr. *Lovelace*, I would not wish to see Mr. *Solmes*, no, not for one half-hour, in the way he is pleased to be desirous to see me. I never can be in any danger from Mr. Lovelace, (and, of consequence, cannot be affected by any of your discoveries,) if the proposal I made be accepted. You have been acquainted with it no doubt. If not, be pleased to let my friends know, that if they will rid *me* of my apprehensions of one gentleman, I will rid them of *theirs* of another: And then, of what consequence to *them*, or to *me*, will it be, whether Mr. Lovelace be a good man, or a bad? And if not to *them*, nor to *me*, I see not how it can be of any to *you*. But if *you* do, I have nothing to say to that; and it will be a christian part, if you will expostulate with him upon the errors you have discovered, and endeavour to make him as good a man, as, no doubt, you are *yourself*, or you would not be so ready to detect and expose *him*.

Excuse me, Sir: but, after my former letter to you, and your ungenerous perseverance; and after this attempt to avail yourself at the expense of another man's character, rather than by your own proper merit; I see not that you can blame any asperity in her, whom you have so largely contributed to make unhappy.

CL. HARLOWE.

Sunday Night.

My father was for coming up to me, in great wrath, it seems; but was persuaded to the contrary. My aunt Hervey was permitted to send me this that follows.—Quick work, my dear!

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

NIECE,

Every body is now convinced, that nothing is to be done with you by way of gentleness or persuasion. Your mother will not permit you to stay in the house; for your father is so incensed by your strange letter to his friend, that she knows not what will be the consequence if you do. So, you are commanded to get ready to go to your uncle Antony's out of hand.

Your uncle thinks he has not deserved of you such an unwillingness as you shew to go to his house.

You don't know the wickedness of the man for whose sake you think it worth while to quarrel with all your friends.

You must not answer me. There will be no end of that.

You know not the affliction you give to every body; but to none more than to

Your affectionate aunt,
DOROTHY HERVEY.

Forbid to write to my aunt, I took a bolder liberty. I wrote a few lines to my mother; beseeching her to procure me leave to throw myself at my father's feet, and hers, if I *must* go, (nobody else present,) to beg pardon for the trouble I had given them both, and their blessings; and to receive their commands as to my removal, and the time for it, from their own lips.

'What new boldness this!—Take it back; and bid her learn to obey,' was my mother's angry answer, with my letter returned, unopened.

But that I might omit nothing, that had an appearance of duty, I wrote a few lines to my father himself, to the same purpose; begging, that he would not turn me out of his house, without his blessing. But this, torn in two pieces, and unopened, was brought me up again by Betty, with an air, one hand held up, the other extended, the torn letter in her open palm; and a See here!—What a sad thing is this!—Nothing will do but duty, Miss!—Your papa said, Let her tell me of *deeds!*—I'll receive no *words* from her. And so he tore the letter, and flung the pieces at my head.

So desperate my case, I was resolved not to stop even at this repulse. I took my pen, and addressed myself to my uncle Harlowe, enclosing that which my mother had returned unopened, and the torn unopened one sent to my father; having first hurried off a transcript for you.

My uncle was going home, and it was delivered to him just as he stepped into his chariot. What may be the fate of it therefore I cannot know till to-morrow.

The following is a copy of it:

TO JOHN HARLOWE, ESQ.

My Dear and Ever-Honoured Uncle,

I have nobody now but you, to whom I can apply, with hope, so much as to have my humble addresses opened and read. My aunt Hervey has given me commands which I want to have explained; but she has forbid me writing to *her*. Hereupon I took the liberty to write to my father and mother. You will see, Sir, by the torn one, and by the other, (both unopened,) what has been the result. This, Sir,

perhaps you already know: but, as you know not the *contents* of the disgraced letters, I beseech you to read them both, that you may be a witness for me, that they are not filled either with complaints or expostulations, nor contain any thing undutiful. Give me leave to say, Sir, that if deaf-eared anger will neither grant *me* a hearing, nor, *what I write* a perusal, some time hence the hard-heartedness may be regretted. I beseech you, dear, good Sir, to let me know what is meant by sending me to my uncle Antony's house, rather than to yours, or to my aunt Hervey's, or else-where? If it be for what I apprehend it to be, life will not be supportable upon the terms. I beg also to know, WHEN I am to be turned out of doors!—My heart strongly gives me, *that if once I am compelled to leave this house, I never shall see it more.*

It becomes me, however, to declare, that I write not this through perverseness, or in resentment. God knows my heart, I do not! But the treatment I apprehend I shall meet with, if carried to my other uncle's, will, in all probability, give the finishing stroke to the distresses, the undeserved distresses I will be bold to call them, of

Your once highly-favoured,
but now unhappy,
CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XVI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Monday Morning, March 27.

THIS morning early my uncle Harlowe came hither. He sent up the enclosed very tender letter. It has made me wish I *could* oblige him. You will see how

Mr. Solmes's ill qualities are glossed over in it. What blemishes does affection hide!—But perhaps they may say to me, What faults does antipathy bring to light!

Be pleased to send me back this letter of my uncle by the first return.

Sunday Night, or rather Monday Morning.

I must answer you, though against my own resolution. Every body loves you; and you know they do. The very ground you walk upon is dear to most of us. But how can we resolve to see you? There is no standing against your looks and language. It is our love makes us decline to see you. How *can* we, when you are resolved *not* to do what we are resolved you *shall* do? I never, for my part, loved any creature, as I loved you from your infancy till now. And indeed, as I have often said, never was there a young creature so deserving of our love. But what is come to you now! Alas! alas! my dear kinswoman, how you fail in the trial!

I have read the letters you enclosed. At a proper time, I may shew them to my brother and sister: but they will receive nothing from you at present.

For my part, I could not read your letter to me, without being unmanned. How can you be so unmoved yourself, yet be so able to move every body else? How could you send such a letter to Mr. Solmes? Fie upon you! How strangely are you altered!

Then to treat your brother and sister as you did, that they don't care to write to you, or to see you! Don't you know where it is written, That *soft answers turn away wrath?* But if you will trust to your sharp-pointed wit, you may wound. Yet a club will beat down a sword: And how can you expect that they who are hurt by you will not hurt you again?

Was this the way you used to take to make us all adore you as we did?—No, it was your gentleness of heart and manners, that made every body, even strangers, at first sight, treat you as a lady, and call you a lady, though not born one, while your elder sister had no such distinctions paid her. If you *were* envied, why should you sharpen envy, and file up its teeth to an edge?—You see I write like an impartial man, and as one that loves you still.

But since you have displayed your talents, and spared nobody, and moved every body, without being moved, you have but made us stand the closer and firmer together. This is what I likened to an *embattled phalanx*, once before. Your aunt Hervey forbids your writing for the same reason that I must not countenance it. We are all afraid to see you, because we know we shall be made as so many fools. Nay, your mother is so afraid of you, that once or twice, when she thought you was coming to force yourself into her presence, she shut the door, and locked herself in, because she knew she must not see you upon *your* terms, and you are resolved you will not see her upon *hers*.

Resolve but to oblige us all, my dearest Miss Clary, and you shall see how we will clasp you every one by turns to our rejoicing hearts. If the one man has not the wit, and the parts, and the person, of the other, no one breathing has a worse heart than that other: and is not the love of all your friends, and a sober man (if he be *not* so polished) to be preferred to a debauchee, though ever so fine a man to look at? You have such talents that you will be adored by the one: but the other has as much advantage in those respects, as you have yourself, and will not set by them one straw: for husbands are sometimes jealous of their authority with witty wives. You will have in one, a man of virtue. Had you not been so rudely affronting to him, he would

have made your ears tingle with what he could have told you of the other.

Come, my dear niece, let me have the honour of doing with you what no-body else yet has been able to do. Your father, mother, and I, will divide the pleasure, and the *honour*, I will again call it, between us; and all past offences shall be forgiven; and Mr. Solmes, we will engage, shall take nothing amiss hereafter, of what has passed.

He knows, he says, what a jewel that man will have, who can obtain your favour; and he will think light of all he has suffered, or shall suffer, in obtaining you.

Dear, sweet creature, oblige us: and oblige us with a grace. It *must* be done, whether with a grace or not. I do assure you it *must*. You must not conquer father, mother, uncles, every body: depend upon that.

I have set up half the night to write this. You do not know how I am touched at reading yours, and writing this. Yet will I be at Harlowe-place early in the morning. So, upon reading this, if you will oblige us all, send me word to come up to your apartment: and I will lead you down, and present you to the embraces of every one: and you will then see, you have more of a brother and sister in them both, than of late your prejudices will let you think you have. This from one who used to love to style himself,

Your paternal uncle,

JOHN HARLOWE.

In about an hour after this kind letter was given me, my uncle sent up to know, if he should be a welcome visiter, upon the terms mentioned in his letter? He bid Betty bring him down a verbal answer: a written one, he said, would be a bad sign: and he bid her

therefore not bring a letter. But I had just finished the enclosed transcription of one I had been writing. She made a difficulty to carry it; but was prevailed upon to oblige me by a token which these Mrs. Betty's cannot withstand.

DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,

How you rejoice me by your condescending goodness!—So kind, so paternal a letter!—so soothing to a wounded heart; and of late what I have been so little used to!—How am I affected with it! Tell me not, dear Sir, of my way of writing: your letter has more moved *me*, than I have been able to move *any body!*—It has made me wish, with all my heart, that I could entitle myself to be visited upon your own terms; and to be led down to my father and mother by so good and so kind an uncle.

I will tell you, dearest Uncle, what I will do to make my peace. I have no doubt that Mr. Solmes, upon consideration, would greatly prefer my sister to such a strange averse creature as me. His chief, or one of his chief motives in his address to me, is, as I have reason to believe, the contiguity of my grandfather's estate to his own. I will resign it; for ever I will resign it: and the resignation must be good, because I will never marry at all. I will make it over to my sister, and her heirs for ever. I shall have no heirs, but my brother and her; and I will receive, as of my father's bounty, such an annuity (not in lieu of the estate, but as *of* his bounty) as he shall be pleased to grant me, if it be ever so small: and whenever I disoblige him, he to withdraw it, at his pleasure.

Will not this be accepted?—Surely it must—surely it will!—I beg of you, dearest Sir, to propose it; and second it with your interest. This will answer every end. My sister has a high opinion of Mr. Solmes.

I never can have *any* in the light he is proposed to me. But as my sister's husband, he will be always entitled to my respect; and shall have it.

If this be accepted, grant me, Sir, the honour of a visit; and do me then the inexpressible pleasure of leading me down to the feet of my honoured parents, and they shall find me the most dutiful of children; and to the arms of my brother and sister, and they shall find me the most obliging and most affectionate of sisters.

I wait, Sir, for your answer to this proposal, made with the whole heart of

Your dutiful and most obliged niece,
Cl. Harlowe.

Monday Noon.

I hope this will be accepted: for Betty tells me, that my uncle Antony and my aunt Hervey are sent for; and not Mr. Solmes; which I look upon as a favourable circumstance. With what cheerfulness will I assign over this envied estate!—What a much more valuable consideration shall I part with it for!—The love and favour of all my relations! That love and favour, which I used for eighteen years together to rejoice in, and be distinguished by!—And what a charming pretence will this afford me of breaking with Mr. Lovelace! And how easy will it possibly make him to part with *me!*

I found this morning, in the usual place, a letter from him, in answer, I suppose, to mine of Friday, which I deposited not till Saturday. But I have not opened it; nor will I, till I see what effect this new offer will have.

Let me but be permitted to avoid the man I *hate;* and I will give up with cheerfulness the man I *could prefer.* To renounce the one, were I really to value

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him as much as you seem to imagine, can give but a *temporary* concern, which *time* and *discretion* will alleviate. *This* is a sacrifice which a child owes to parents and friends, if they insist upon its being made. But the other, to marry a man one *cannot endure*, is not only a dishonest thing, as to the man; but it is enough to make a creature who wishes to be a *good wife*, a bad or indifferent one, as I once wrote to the man himself: and then she can hardly be either a *good mistress*, or a *good friend*; or any thing but a discredit to her family, and a bad example to all around her.

Methinks I am loth, in the *suspense* I am in at present, to deposit this, because it will be leaving you in one as *great:* but having been prevented by Betty's officiousness twice, I will now go down to my little poultry; and, if I have an opportunity, will leave it in the usual place, where I hope to find something from you.

LETTER XVII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Monday Afternoon, March 27.

I HAVE deposited my narrative down to this day noon; but I hope soon to follow it with another letter, that I may keep you as little a while as possible in that suspense which I am so much affected by at this moment: for my heart is disturbed at every foot I hear stir; and at every door below that I hear open or shut.

They have been all assembled some time, and are in close debate I believe: But can there be room for long debate upon a proposal, which, if accepted, will so effectually answer all their views?—Can they insist a

moment longer upon my having Mr. Solmes, when they see what sacrifices I am ready to make, to be freed from his addresses?—Oh! but I suppose the struggle is, first, with Bella's nicety, to persuade her to accept of the estate, and of the husband; and next, with her pride, to take her *sister's refusals*, as she once phrased it!—Or, it may be, my brother is insisting upon equivalents for his reversion in the estate: and these sort of things take up but too much the attention of some of our family. To these, no doubt, one or both, it must be owing, that my proposal admits of so much consideration.

I want, methinks, to see what Mr. Lovelace, in his letter, says. But I will deny myself *this* piece of curiosity till that which is raised by my present suspense is answered.—Excuse me, my dear, that I thus trouble you with my uncertainties: but I have no employment, nor heart, if I had, to pursue any other but what my pen affords me.

Monday Evening.

Would you believe it?—Betty, by anticipation, tells me, that I am to be refused. I am 'a vile, artful creature. Every body is too good to me. My uncle Harlowe has been *taken in*, that's the phrase. They knew how it would be, if he either wrote to me, or saw me. He has, however, been made ashamed to be so wrought upon. A pretty thing truly in the eye of the world would it be, were they to take me at my word! It would look as if they had treated me thus hardly, as *I* think it, for this very purpose. My *peculiars*, particularly Miss Howe, would give it that turn; and I myself could mean nothing by it, but to see if it would be accepted in order to strengthen my own arguments against Mr. Solmes. It was amazing, that it could admit of a moment's deliberation: that

any thing could be *supposed* to be done in it. It was equally against law and equity: and a fine security Miss Bella would have, or Mr. Solmes, when I could resume it when I would!—My *brother* and *she* my heirs! O the artful creature!—*I* to resolve to live single, when Lovelace is so *sure* of me—and every where declares as much!—and can whenever he pleases, if my husband, claim under the will!—Then the insolence—the confidence—[as Betty mincingly told me, that *one* said; you may easily guess who] that she, who was so justly in disgrace for downright rebellion, should pretend to prescribe to the whole family!—Should name a husband for her elder sister! —What a triumph would her obstinacy go away with, to delegate her commands, not as from a prison, as she called it, but as from her throne, to her elders and betters; and to her father and mother too!—Amazing, perfectly amazing, that any body could argue upon such a proposal as this! It was a master-stroke of *finesse*—It was ME in perfection!—Surely my uncle Harlowe will never again be so taken in!'

All this was the readier told me, because it was against me, and would tease and vex me. But as some of this fine recapitulation implied, that somebody spoke up for me. I was curious to know who it was. But Betty would not tell me, for fear I should have the consolation to find that *all* were not against me.

But do you not see, my dear, what a sad creature she is whom you honour with your friendship?—You could not doubt your influence over me: Why did you not let me know myself a little better?—Why did you not take the friendly liberty I have always taken with you, and tell me my faults, and what a specious hypocrite I am? For, if my brother and sister could make such discoveries, how is it possible, that faults so enormous [you could see *others*, you thought, of a

more secret nature!] could escape your penetrating eye?

Well, but now, it seems, they are debating how and by whom to answer me: for they know not, nor *are* they to know, that Mrs. Betty has told me all these fine things. One desires to be excused, it seems: another chooses not to have any thing to say to me: another has enough of me: and of writing to so ready a scribbler, there will be no end.

Thus are those imputed qualifications, which used so lately to gain me applause, now become my crimes: so much do disgust and anger alter the property of things.

The result of their debate, I suppose, will somehow or other be communicated to me by-and-by. But let me tell you, my dear, that I am made so desperate, that I am afraid to open Mr. Lovelace's letter, lest, in the humour I am in, I should do something (if I find it not exceptionable) that may give me repentance as long as I live.

Monday night.

This moment the following letter is brought me by Betty.

Monday, 5 o'clock.

MISS CUNNING-ONE,

Your fine new proposal is thought unworthy of a particular answer. Your uncle Harlowe is ashamed to be so taken in. Have you no new fetch for your uncle Antony? Go round with us, child, now your hand's in. But I was bid to write only one line, that you might not complain, as you did of your worthy sister, for the freedoms you provoked: It is this—Prepare yourself. To-morrow you go to my uncle Antony's. That's all, child.

JAMES HARLOWE.

I was vexed to the heart at this: and immediately, in the warmth of resentment, wrote the enclosed to my uncle Harlowe; who it seems stays here this night.

TO JOHN HARLOWE, ESQ.

Monday Night.

HONOURED SIR,

I find I am a very sad creature, and did not know it. I wrote not to my brother. To *you*, Sir, I wrote. From *you* I hope the honour of an answer. No one reveres her uncle more than I do. Nevertheless, I will be bold to say, that the distance, great as it is, between uncle and niece, excludes not such a hope: and I think I have not made a proposal that deserves to be treated with scorn.

Forgive me, Sir—My heart is full. Perhaps one day you may think you have been *prevailed upon* (for that is plainly the case!) to join to treat me—as I do not deserve to be treated. If *you* are ashamed, as my brother hints, of having expressed any returning tenderness to me, God help me! I see I have no mercy to expect from any body! But, Sir, from *your* pen let me have an answer; I humbly implore it of you. Till my brother can recollect what belongs to a sister, I will take from *him* no answer to the letter I wrote to *you*, nor any commands whatever.

I move every body!—This, Sir, is what you are pleased to mention. But whom have I moved?—One person in the family has more moving ways than I have, or he could never so undeservedly have made every body ashamed to show tenderness to a poor distressed child of the same family.

Return me not this with contempt, or torn, or unanswered, I beseech you. My father has a title to do that or any thing by his child: but from no other

person in the world of your sex, Sir, ought a young creature of mine (while she preserves a supplicating spirit) to be so treated.

When what I have before written in the humblest strain has met with such strange constructions, I am afraid that this unguarded scrawl will be very ill received. But I beg, Sir, you will oblige me with one line, be it ever so harsh, in answer to my proposal. I still think it ought to be attended to. I will enter into the most solemn engagements to make it valid by a perpetual single life. In a word, any thing I *can* do, I *will* do, to be restored to all your favours. More I cannot say, but that I am, very undeservedly,

A most unhappy creature.

Betty scrupled again to carry this letter; and said, she should have anger; and I should have it returned in scraps and bits.

I must take that chance, said I: I only desire that you will deliver it as directed.

Sad doings! very sad! she said, that young ladies should so violently set themselves against their duty.

I told her, she should have the liberty to say what she pleased, so she would but be my messenger that one time: and down she went with it.

I bid her, if she could, slide it into my uncle's hand, unseen; at least unseen by my brother or sister, for fear it should meet, through *their* good offices, with the fate she had bespoken for it.

She would not undertake for that, she said.

I am now in expectation of the result. But having so little ground to hope for either favour or mercy, I opened Mr. Lovelace's letter.

I would send it to you, my dear (as well as those I shall enclose) by this conveyance; but not being able at present to determine in what manner I shall answer

it, I will give myself the trouble of abstracting it here, while I am waiting for what may offer from the letter just carried down.

'He laments, as usual, my ill opinion of him, and readiness to believe every thing to his disadvantage. He puts into plain English, as I supposed he would, my hint, that I might be happier, if, by any rashness he might be guilty of to Solmes, he should come to an untimely end himself.'

He is concerned, he says, 'That the violence he had expressed on his extreme apprehensiveness of losing me, should have made him guilty of any thing I had so much reason to resent.'

He owns, 'That he is passionate: all good-natured men, he says, are so; and a sincere man cannot hide it.' But appeals to me, 'Whether, if any occasion in the world could excuse the rashness of his expressions, it would not be his present dreadful situation, through my indifference, and the malice of his enemies.'

He says, 'He has more reason than ever, from the contents of my last, to apprehend, that I shall be prevailed upon by force, if not by fair means, to fall in with my brother's measures; and sees but too plainly, that I am preparing him to expect it.

'Upon this presumption, he supplicates, with the utmost earnestness, that I will not give way to the malice of his enemies.

'Solemn vows of reformation, and everlasting truth and obligingness, he makes; all in the style of desponding humility: yet calls it a cruel turn upon him, to impute his protestations to a consciousness of the necessity there is for making them from his bad character.

'He despises himself, he solemnly protests, for his past follies. He thanks God he has seen his error; and nothing but my more particular instructions is wanting to perfect his reformation.

'He promises, that he will do every thing that I shall think he can do with honour, to bring about a reconciliation with my father; and even will, if I insist upon it, make the first overtures to my brother, and treat him as his own brother, because he is mine, if he will not by new affronts revive the remembrance of the past.

'He begs, in the most earnest and humble manner, for one half-hour's interview; undertaking by a key, which he owns he has to the garden-door, leading into the *coppice*, as we call it, (if I will but unbolt the door,) to come into the garden at night, and wait till I have an opportunity to come to him, that he may re-assure me of the truth of all he writes, and of the affection, and, if needful, protection, of all his family.

'He presumes not, he says, to write by way of menace to me; but if I refuse him this favour, he knows not (so desperate have some strokes in my letter made him) what his despair may make him do.'

He asks me, 'Determined, as my friends are, and far as they have already gone, and declare they will go, what can I propose to do, to avoid having Mr. Solmes, if I am carried to my uncle Antony's; unless I resolve to accept of the protection he has offered to procure me; or except I will escape to London, or elsewhere, while I *can* escape?'

He advises me, 'To sue to *your* mother, for her private reception of me; only till I can obtain possession of my own estate, and procure my friends to be reconciled to me; which he is sure they will be desirous to *be*, the moment I am out of their power.'

He apprizes me, [It is still my wonder, how he comes by his intelligence!] 'That my friends have written to my cousin Morden to represent matters to him in their own partial way; nor doubt they to influence him on their side of the question.

'That all this shews I have but *one* way; if none of my own friends or intimates will receive me.

'If I will transport him with the honour of my choice of this *one* way, settlements shall be drawn, with proper blanks, which I shall fill up as I pleased. Let him but have my commands from my own mouth, all my doubts and scruples from my own lips; and only a repetition, that I will not, on any consideration, be Solmes's wife; and he shall be easy. But, after such a letter as I have written, nothing but an interview can make him so.' He beseeches me therefore, 'To unbolt the door, *as that very night;* or, if I receive not this time enough, *this night;*—and he will, in a disguise that shall not give a suspicion who he is, if he should be seen, come to the garden door, in hopes to open it with his key; nor will he have any other lodging than in the coppice both nights; watching every wakeful hour for the propitious unbolting, unless he has a letter with my orders to the contrary, or to make some other appointment.'

This letter was dated yesterday: so he was there last night, I suppose; and will be there this night; and I have not written a line to him: and now it is too late, were I determined *what* to write.

I hope he will not go to Mr. Solmes.—I hope he will not come hither.—If he do either, I will break with him for ever.

What have I to do with such headstrong spirits? I wish I had never—but what signifies wishing?—I am strangely perplexed: but I need not have told you this, after such a representation of my situation.

LETTER XVIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Tuesday Morning, 7 o'clock.

My uncle has vouchsafed to answer me. These that follow are the contents of his letter; but just now brought me, although written last night—late I suppose.

Monday Night.

Miss Clary,

Since you are grown such a bold challenger, and teach us all our duty, though you will not practise your own, I *must* answer you. Nobody wants your estate from you. Are *you*, who refuse every body's advice, to prescribe a husband to your *sister?* Your letter to Mr. Solmes is inexcusable. I blamed you for it before. Your parents *will* be obeyed. It is fit they *should*. Your mother has nevertheless prevailed to have your going to your uncle Antony's put off till Thursday: yet owns you deserve not that, or any other favour from her. I will receive no more of your letters. You are too artful for me. You are an ungrateful and unreasonable child: Must you have your way paramount to every body's? How are you altered.

Your displeased uncle,
John Harlowe.

To be carried away on Thursday—To the moated house—To the chapel—To Solmes! How can I think of this!—They will make me desperate.

Tuesday Morning, 8 o'clock.

I have another letter from Mr. Lovelace. I opened it with the expectation of its being filled with bold and free complaints, on my not writing to prevent his two nights watching, in weather not extremely agreeable. But, instead of complaints, he is 'full of tender concern lest I may have been prevented by indisposition, or by the closer confinement which he has frequently cautioned me that I may expect.'

He says, 'He had been in different disguises loitering about our garden and park wall, all the day on Sunday last; and all Sunday night was wandering about the coppice, and near the back door. It rained; and he has got a great cold, attended with feverishness, and so hoarse, that he has almost lost his voice.'

Why did he not flame out in his letter?—Treated as I am treated by my friends, it is dangerous to be laid under the sense of an obligation to an addresser's patience; especially when such a one suffers in health for my sake.

'He had no shelter, he says, but under the great overgrown ivy, which spreads wildly round the heads of two or three oaklings; and that was soon wet through.'

You remember the spot. You and I, my dear, once thought ourselves obliged to the natural shade which those ivy-covered oaklings afforded us, in a sultry day.

I can't help saying, I am sorry he has suffered for my sake; but 'tis his own seeking.

His letter is dated last night at eight: 'And, indisposed as he is, he tells me that he will watch till ten, in hopes of my giving him the meeting he so earnestly requests. And after that, he has a mile to walk to

his horse and servant; and four miles then to ride to his inn.'

He owns, 'That he has an intelligencer in our family; who has failed him for a day or two past: and not knowing how I do, or how I may be treated, his anxiety is increased.'

This circumstance gives me to guess who this intelligencer is: Joseph Leman: the very creature employed and confided in, more than any other, by my brother.

This is not an honourable way of proceeding in Mr. Lovelace. Did he learn this infamous practice of corrupting the servants of other families at the French court, where he resided a good while?

I have been often jealous of this Leman in my little airings and poultry-visits. Doubly obsequious as he was always to me, I have thought him my brother's spy upon me; and although he obliged me by his hastening out of the garden and poultry-yard, whenever I came into either, have wondered, that from *his reports* my liberties of those kinds have not been abridged.* So, possibly, this man may be bribed by both, and yet betray both. Worthy views want not such obliquities as these on either side. An honest mind must rise into indignation both at the traitor-maker and the traitor.

'He presses with the utmost earnestness for an interview. He would not presume, he says, to disobey my last personal commands, that he should not endeavour to attend me again in the wood-house. But says, he can give me such reasons for my permitting him to wait upon my father or uncles, as he hopes will be approved by me: for he cannot help observing, that it is no more suitable to my own spirit than to his, that he, a man of fortune and family, should be obliged to

* Mr. Lovelace accounts for this, Vol. I. Letter XXXV.

pursue such a clandestine address, as would only become a vile fortune-hunter. But, if I will give my consent for his visiting me like a man, and a gentleman, no ill treatment shall provoke him to forfeit his temper.

'Lord M. will accompany him, if I please: or Lady Betty Lawrance will first make the visit to my mother, or to my aunt Hervey, or even to my uncles, if I choose it. And such terms shall be offered, as *shall* have weight upon them.

'He begs, that I will not deny him making a visit to Mr. Solmes. By all that's good, he vows, that it shall not be with the least intention either to hurt or affront him; but only to set before him, calmly and rationally, the consequences that may possibly flow from so fruitless a perseverance, as well as the ungenerous folly of it, to a mind so noble as mine. He repeats his own resolution to attend my pleasure, and Mr. Morden's arrival and advice, for the reward of his own patience.

'It is impossible, he says, but one of these methods *must* do. Presence, he observes, even of a disliked person, takes off the edge of resentments which absence whets, and makes keen.

'He therefore most earnestly repeats his importunities for the supplicated interview.' He says, 'He has business of consequence in London: but cannot stir from the inconvenient spot where he has for some time resided, in disguises unworthy of himself, until he can be absolutely certain, that I shall not be prevailed upon, either by force or otherwise; and until he finds me delivered from the insults of my brother. Nor ought this to be an indifferent point to one, for whose sake all the world reports me to be used unworthily. But *one* remark, he says, he cannot help making: that did my friends know the little favour I

shew him, and the very great distance I keep him at, they would have no reason to confine me on his account. And *another*, that they *themselves* seem to think him entitled to a different usage, and expect that he receives it; when, in truth, what he meets with from me is exactly what they wish him to meet with, excepting in the favour of the correspondence I honour him with; upon which, he says, he puts the highest value, and for the sake of which he has submitted to a thousand indignities.

'He renews his professions of reformation. He is convinced, he says, that he has already run a long and dangerous course; and that it is high time to think of returning. It *must be* from proper convictions, he says, that a person who has lived too gay a life, resolves to reclaim, before age or sufferings come upon him.

'All generous spirits, he observes, hate compulsion. Upon this observation he dwells; but regrets, that he is likely to owe all his hopes to this compulsion; this *injudicious* compulsion, he justly calls it; and none to my esteem for him. Although he presumes upon some merit—in this implicit regard to my will—in the bearing the daily indignities offered not only to him, but to his relations, by my brother—in the nightly watchings, and risques which he runs, in all weathers; and which his present indisposition makes him mention, or he had not debased the nobleness of his passion for me, by such a selfish instance.'

I cannot but say, I am sorry the man is not well.

I am afraid to ask you, my dear, what *you* would have done, thus situated. But what I *have* done, I *have* done. In a word, I wrote, 'That I would, if possible, give him a meeting to-morrow night, between the hours of nine and twelve, by the ivy summer-house, or in it, or near the great cascade, at the bottom of the garden; and would unbolt the door, that he might

come in by his own key. But that, if I found the meeting impracticable, or should change my mind, I would signify as much by another line ; which he must wait for until it were dark.'

Tuesday, Eleven o'clock.

I am just returned from depositing my billet. How diligent is this man ! It is plain he was in waiting : for I had walked but a few paces, after I had deposited it, when, my heart misgiving me, I returned, to have taken it back, in order to reconsider it as I walked, and whether I should or should not let it go. But I found it gone.

In all probability, there was but a brick wall, of a few inches thick, between Mr. Lovelace and me, at the very time I put the letter under the brick !

I am come back dissatisfied with myself. But I think, my dear, there can be no harm in meeting him. If I do *not*, he may take some violent measures. What he knows of the treatment I meet with in malice to him, and with the view to frustrate all his hopes, may make him desperate. His behaviour last time I saw him, under the disadvantages of time and place, and surprised as I was, gives me no apprehension of any thing but discovery. What he requires is not unreasonable, and cannot affect my future choice and determination : it is only to assure him from my own lips, that I never will be the wife of a man I hate. If I have not an opportunity to meet without hazard or detection, he must once more bear the disappointment. All his trouble, and mine too, is owing to his faulty character. This, although I hate tyranny and arrogance in all shapes, makes me think less of the risques he runs, and the fatigues he undergoes, than otherwise I should do ; and still less, as my sufferings (derived from the same source) are greater than his.

Betty confirms the intimation, that I must go to my uncle's on Thursday. She was sent on purpose to direct me to prepare myself for going, and to help me to get every thing up in order for my removal.

LETTER XIX

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Thursday, Three o'clock, March 28.

I HAVE mentioned several times the pertness of Mrs. Betty to me; and now, having a little time upon my hands, I will give you a short dialogue that passed just now between us. It may, perhaps, be a little relief to you from the dull subjects with which I am perpetually teasing you.

As she attended me at dinner, she took notice, That Nature is satisfied with a very little nourishment: and thus she complimentally proved it—For, Miss, said she, you eat nothing; yet never looked more charmingly in your life.

As to the former part of your speech, Betty, said I, you observe well; and I have often thought, when I have seen how healthy the children of the labouring poor *look*, and *are*, with empty stomachs, and hardly a good meal in a week, that God Almighty is very kind to his creatures, in this respect, as well as in all others in making *much* not necessary to the support of life; when three parts in four of His creatures, if it were, would not know how to obtain it. It puts me in mind of two proverbial sentences which are full of admirable meaning.

What, pray, Miss, are they? I love to hear you talk, when you are so sedate as you seem now to be.

The one is to the purpose we are speaking of: *Poverty is the mother of health.* And let me tell you, Betty, if I had a better appetite, and were to encourage it, with so little rest, and so much distress and persecution, I don't think I should be able to preserve my reason.

There's no inconvenience but has its convenience, said Betty, giving me proverb for proverb. But what is the other, Madam?

That the *pleasures of the mighty are obtained by the tears of the poor.* It is but reasonable, therefore, methinks, that the plenty of the one should be followed by distempers; and that the indigence of the other should be attended with that health, which makes all its other discomforts light on the comparison. And hence a third proverb, Betty, since you are an admirer of proverbs: *Better a hare-foot than none at all;* that is to say, than not to be able to walk.

She was mightily taken with what I said: See, returned she, what a fine thing scholarship is!—I, said she, had always, from a girl, a taste for reading, though it were but in *Mother Goose*, and concerning the *fairies* [and then she took genteelly a pinch of snuff]: could but my parents *have let go as fast as I pulled*, I should have been a very happy creature.

Very likely, you would have made great improvements, Betty: but as it is, I cannot say, but since I had the favour of your attendance in this *intimate* manner, I have heard smarter things from you, than I have heard at table from some of my brother's fellow-collegians.

Your servant, dear Miss; dropping me one of her best courtesies: so fine a judge as you are!—It is enough to make one very proud. Then with another pinch—I cannot indeed but say, bridling upon it, that I have heard famous scholars often and often say very silly things: things I should be ashamed myself to say;

but I thought they did it out of humility, and in condescension to those who had not their learning.

That she might not be too proud, I told her, I would observe, that the liveliness or quickness she so happily discovered in herself, was not so much an honour to her, as what she owed to her *sex;* which, as I had observed in many instances, had great advantages over the other, in all the powers that related to imagination. And hence, Mrs. Betty, you'll take notice, as I have of late had opportunity to do, that your own talent at repartee and smartness, when it has *something to work upon*, displays itself to more advantage, than could well be expected from one whose friends, to speak in your own phrase, could not *let go so fast as you pulled.*

The wench gave me a proof of the truth of my observation, in a manner still more alert than I had expected: If, said she, our sex had so much advantage in *smartness*, it is the less to be wondered at, that *you*, Miss, who have had such an education, should outdo all the men and *women* too, that come near you.

Bless me, Betty, said I, what a proof do you give me of your wit and your courage at the same time! This is outdoing yourself. It would make young ladies less proud, and more apprehensive, were they generally attended by such smart servants, and their mouths permitted to be unlocked upon them as yours has been lately upon me.—But, take away, Mrs. Betty.

Why, Miss, you have eat nothing at all—I hope you are not displeased with your dinner for any thing I have said.

No, Mrs. Betty, I am pretty well used to your freedoms now, you know.—I am not displeased in the main, to observe, that, were the succession of modern fine ladies to be extinct, it might be supplied from those whom they place in the next rank to themselves, their chamber-maids and confidants. Your young mis-

tress has contributed a great deal to this quickness of yours. She always preferred your company to mine. As *you pulled, she let go;* and so, Mrs. Betty, you have gained by *her* conversation what I have lost.

Why, Miss, if you come to that, nobody says better things than Miss Harlowe. I could tell you one, if *I pleased*, upon my observing to her, that you lived of late upon the air, and had no stomach to any thing; yet looked as charmingly as ever.

I dare say, it was a very good-natured one, Mrs. Betty! Do you then *please* that I shall hear it?

Only this, Miss, *That your stomachfulness had swallowed up your stomach;* and, *That obstinacy was meat, drink, and clothes to you.*

Ay, Mrs. Betty; and *did* she say this?—I hope she laughed when she said it, as she does at all her *good things*, as she calls them. It was very smart, and very witty. I wish my mind were so much at ease, as to aim at being witty too. But if you admire such sententious sayings, I'll help you to another; and that is, *Encouragement and approbation make people show talents they were never suspected to have;* and this will do both for mistress and maid. And another I'll furnish you with, the contrary of the former, that will do only for me: That *persecution and discouragement depress* ingenuous *minds, and blunt the edge of lively imaginations.* And hence may my *sister*'s brilliancy and *my* stupidity be both accounted for. *Ingenuous*, you must know, Mrs. Betty, and *ingenious*, are two things; and I would not arrogate the latter to myself.

Lord, Miss, said the foolish girl, you know a great deal for your years.—You are a very learned young lady!—What pity—

None of your *pitties*, Mrs. Betty, I know what you'd say. But tell me, if you can, Is it resolved that I shall be carried to my uncle Antony's on Thursday?

I was willing to reward myself for the patience she had made me exercise, by getting at what intelligence I could from her.

Why, Miss, seating herself at a little distance (excuse my sitting down) with the snuff-box tapped very smartly, the lid opened, and a pinch taken with a dainty finger and thumb, the other three fingers distendedly bent, and with a fine flourish—I cannot but say, that it is my opinion, you will certainly go on Thursday; and this *noless foless*, as I have heard my young lady say in FRENCH.

Whether I am *willing* or *not willing*, you mean, I suppose, Mrs. Betty?

You have it, Miss.

Well but, Betty, I have no mind to be turned out of doors so suddenly. Do you think I could not be permitted to tarry one week longer?

How can I tell, Miss?

O Mrs. Betty, you can tell a great deal, if *you please*. But here I am forbid writing to any one of my family; none of it now will come near *me;* nor will any of it permit me to see *them:* How shall I do to make known my request, to stay here a week or fortnight longer?

Why, Miss, I fancy, if you were to shew a compliable temper, your friends would shew a compliable one too. But would you expect favours, and grant none?

Smartly put, Betty! But who knows what may be the result of my being carried to my uncle Antony's?

Who knows, Miss!—Why any body will guess what may be the result.

As how, Betty?

As how! repeated the pert wench, Why, Miss, you will stand in your own light, as you have hitherto done: and your parents, as such good parents *ought*, will be obeyed.

If, Mrs. Betty, I had not been used to your *oughts*, and to have my duty laid down to me by your oraculous wisdom I should be apt to stare at the liberty of your speech.

You seem angry, Miss. I hope I take no unbecoming liberty.

If thou really thinkest thou dost not, thy ignorance is more to be pitied, than thy pertness resented. I wish thou wouldst leave me to myself.

When young ladies fall out with their *own* duty, it is not much to be wondered at, that they are angry at any body who do *theirs*.

That's a very pretty saying, Mrs. Betty!—I see plainly what *thy* duty is in *thy* notion, and am obliged to those who taught it thee.

Every body takes notice, Miss, that you can say very cutting words in a cool manner, and yet not call names, as I have *known some* gentlefolks as well as others do when in a passion. But I wish you had permitted 'Squire Solmes to see you: he would have told you such stories of 'Squire Lovelace, as would have turned your heart against him for ever.

And know you any of the particulars of those sad stories?

Indeed I don't; but you'll hear all at your uncle Antony's, I suppose; and a great deal more perhaps than you will like to hear.

Let me hear what I will, I am determined against Mr. Solmes, were it to cost me my life.

If you are, Miss, the Lord have mercy on you! For what with this letter of yours to 'Squire Solmes, whom they so much value, and what with their antipathy to 'Squire Lovelace, whom they hate, they will have no patience with you.

What will they do, Betty? They won't kill me? What *will* they do?

Kill you! No!—But you will not be suffered to stir from thence, till you have complied with your duty. And *no pen and ink* will be allowed you as here; where they are of opinion you make no good use of it: nor would it be allowed here, only as they intend so soon to send you away to your uncle's. No-body will be permitted to see you, or to correspond with you. What farther will be done, I can't say; and, if I could, it may not be proper. But you may prevent it all, by one word: and I wish you would, Miss. All then would be easy and happy. And, if I may speak my mind, I see not why one man is not as good as another: why, especially, a sober man is not as good as a rake.

Well, Betty, said I, sighing, all thy impertinence goes for nothing. But I see I am destined to be a very unhappy creature. Yet I will venture upon one request more to them.

And so, quite sick of the pert creature and of myself, I retired to my closet, and wrote a few lines to my uncle Harlowe, notwithstanding his prohibition; in order to get a reprieve from being carried away so soon as Thursday next, if I must go. And this, that I might, if complied with, suspend the appointment I have made with Mr. Lovelace; for my heart misgives me as to meeting him; and that more and more; I know not why. Under the superscription of the letter, I wrote these words: 'Pray, dear Sir, be pleased to give this a reading.'

This is the copy of what I wrote:

Tuesday Afternoon.

HONOURED SIR,

Let me this once be heard with patience, and have my petition granted. It is only, that I may not be hurried away so soon as next Thursday.

Why should the poor girl be turned out of doors so suddenly, so disgracefully? Procure for me, Sir, one fortnight's respite. In that space of time, I hope you will all relent. My mamma shall not need to shut her door in apprehension of seeing her disgraced child. I will not presume to think of entering her presence, or my papa's without leave. One fortnight's respite is but a *small favour* for them to grant, except I am to be refused every thing I ask; but it is of the *highest import* to my peace of mind. Procure it for me, therefore, dear Sir; and you will exceedingly oblige

Your dutiful, though greatly afflicted niece,

CL. HARLOWE.

I sent this down: my uncle was not gone: and he now stays to know the result of the question put to me in the enclosed answer which he has given to mine.

YOUR going to your uncle's was absolutely concluded upon for next Thursday. Nevertheless, your mother, seconded by Mr. Solmes, pleaded so strongly to have you indulged, that your request for a delay will be complied with, upon one condition; and whether for a fortnight, or a shorter time, that will depend upon yourself. If you refuse this condition, your mother declares she will give over all further intercession for you.—Nor do you deserve this favour, as you put it upon our yielding to you, not you to us.

This condition is, that you admit of a visit from Mr. Solmes, for one hour, in company of your brother, your sister, or your uncle Antony, choose which you will.

If you comply not, you go next Thursday to a house which is become strangely odious to you of late, whether you get ready to go or not. Answer therefore directly to the point. No evasion. Name your day and hour. Mr. Solmes will neither eat you, nor drink you. Let

us see, whether *we* are to be complied with *in any thing*, or not.

JOHN HARLOWE.

After a very little deliberation, I resolved to comply with this condition. All I fear is, that Mr. Lovelace's intelligencer may inform him of it; and that his apprehensions upon it may make him take some desperate resolution: especially as now (having more time given me here) I think to write to him to suspend the interview he is possibly so sure of. I sent down the following to my uncle:

HONOURED SIR,

Although I see not what end the proposed condition can answer, I comply with it. I wish I could with every thing expected of me. If I must name one, in whose company I am to see the gentleman, and that *one* not my mamma, whose presence I could wish to be honoured by on the occasion, let my uncle, if he pleases, be the *person*. If I must name the *day*, (a long day, I doubt, will not be permitted me,) let it be next Tuesday.

The *hour*, four in the afternoon. The *place* either the ivy summer-house, or in the little parlour I used to be permitted to call mine.

Be pleased, Sir, nevertheless, to prevail upon my mamma, to vouchsafe me her presence on the occasion.

I am, Sir, your ever-dutiful

CL. HARLOWE.

A reply is just sent me. I thought it became my averseness to this meeting, to name a distant day: but I did not expect they would have complied with it. So here is one week gained!

This is the reply:

You have done well to comply. We are willing to think the best of every slight instance of duty from you. Yet have you seemed to consider the day as an evil day, and so put it far off. This nevertheless is granted you, as no time need to be lost, if you are as generous *after* the day, as we are condescending *before* it. Let me advise you, not to harden your mind; nor take up your resolution beforehand. Mr. Solmes has more awe, and even terror, at the thoughts of seeing you, than you can have at the thoughts of seeing him. *His* motive is *love;* let not *yours* be *hatred.* My brother Antony will be present, in hopes you will deserve well of *him*, by behaving well to the friend of the family. See you use him as such. Your mother had permission to be there, if she thought fit: but says, she would not for a thousand pound, unless you would encourage her beforehand as she wishes to be encouraged. One hint I am to give you mean time. It is this: *To make a discreet use of your pen and ink.* Methinks a young creature of niceness should be less ready to write to one man, when she is designed to be another's.

This compliance, I hope, will produce greater, and then the peace of the family will be restored: which is what is heartily wished by

Your loving uncle,
JOHN HARLOWE.

Unless it be to the purpose our hearts are set upon, you need not write again.

This man have *more terror at seeing me, than I can have at seeing him!*—How can that be? If he had half as much, he would not wish to see me!—His *motive love!*—Yes, indeed! Love of himself! He knows no other; for love, that deserves the name, seeks

the satisfaction of the beloved object more than its own. Weighed in this scale, what a profanation is this man guilty of!

Not to take up my resolution beforehand!—That advice comes too late.

But I must *make a discreet use of my pen.* That, I doubt, as they have managed it, in the sense they mean it, is as much out of my power, as the other.

But *write to one man, when I am designed for another!* —What a shocking expression is that!

Repenting of my appointment with Mr. Lovelace *before* I had this favour granted me, you may believe I hesitated not a moment to revoke it *now* that I had gained such a respite. Accordingly, I wrote, 'That I found it inconvenient to meet him, as I had intended: that the risque I should run of a discovery, and the mischiefs that might flow from it, could not be justified by any end that such a meeting could answer: that I found one certain servant more in my way, when I took my morning and evening airings, than any other: that the person who might reveal the secrets of a family to *him*, might, if opportunity were given him, betray me, or him, to those whom it was his duty to serve: that I had not been used to a conduct so faulty, as to lay myself at the mercy of servants: and was sorry he had measures to pursue, that made steps necessary in his own opinion, which, in mine, were very culpable, and which no end could justify: that things drawing towards a crisis between my friends and me, an interview could avail nothing; especially as the method by which this correspondence was carried on was not suspected, and he could write all that was in his mind to write: that I expected to be at liberty to judge of what was proper and fit upon this occasion: especially as he might be assured, that I would sooner choose death, than Mr. Solmes.'

Tuesday Night.

I have deposited my letter to Mr. Lovelace. Threatening as things look against me, I am much better pleased with myself for declining the interview than I was before. I suppose he will be a little out of humour upon it, however: but as I reserved to myself the liberty of changing my mind; and as it is easy for him to imagine there may be reasons for it *within-doors*, which he cannot judge of *without;* besides those I have suggested, which of themselves are of sufficient weight to engage his acquiescence; I should think it strange, if he acquiesces not on this occasion, and that with a cheerfulness, which may shew me, that his last letter is written from his heart: For, if he be really so much concerned at his past faults, as he pretends, and has for some time pretended, must he not, of course, have corrected, in some degree, the impetuosity of his temper? The first step to reformation, as I conceive, is to subdue sudden gusts of passion, from which frequently the greatest evils arise, and to learn to bear disappointments. If the irascible passions cannot be overcome, what opinion can we have of the person's power over those to which bad habit, joined to *greater* temptation, gives stronger force?

Pray, my dear, be so kind as to make inquiry, by some safe hand, after the disguises Mr. Lovelace assumes at the inn he puts up at in the poor village of *Neale*, he calls it. If it be the same I take it to be, I never knew it was considerable enough to have a name; nor that it has an inn in it.

As he must, to be so constantly near us, be much there, I would be glad to have some account of his behaviour; and what the people think of him. In such a length of time, he must by his conduct either give scandal, or hope of reformation. Pray, my dear,

humour me in this inquiry. I have reasons for it, which you shall be acquainted with another time, if the result of the inquiry discover them not.

LETTER XX

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Wednesday Morning, Nine o'clock.

I AM just returned from my morning walk, and already have received a letter from Mr. Lovelace in answer to mine deposited last night. He must have had pen, ink, and paper with him; for it was written in the coppice; with this circumstance: On one knee, kneeling with the other. *Not* from reverence to the written to, however, as you'll find!

Well we are instructed early to keep these men at distance. An undesigning open heart, where it is loth to disoblige, is easily drawn in, I see, to oblige more than ever it designed. It is too apt to govern itself by what a bold spirit is encouraged to *expect* of it. It is very difficult for a good-natured young person to give a negative where it disesteems not.

Our hearts may harden and contract, as we gain experience, and when we have smarted perhaps for our easy folly: and so they *ought*, or we should be upon very unequal terms with the world.

Excuse these grave reflections. This man has vexed me heartily. I see his gentleness was *art:* fierceness, and a temper like what I have been too much used to at home, are *Nature* in him. Nothing, I think, shall ever make me forgive him; for, surely, there can be no good reason for his impatience on an expectation given with reserve, and revocable.—*I* so

much to suffer *through* him; yet, to be treated as if I were obliged to bear insults *from* him!—

But here you will be pleased to read his letter; which I shall enclose.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Good God!

What is *now* to become of me!—How shall I support this disappointment!—No new cause!—On one knee, kneeling with the other, I write!—My feet benumbed with midnight wanderings through the heaviest dews that ever fell: my wig and my linen dripping with the hoar frost dissolving on them!—Day but just breaking—Sun not risen to exhale—May it never rise again!—Unless it bring healing and comfort to a benighted soul! In proportion to the joy you had inspired (ever lovely promiser!) in such proportion is my anguish!

O my beloved creature!—But are not your very excuses confessions of excuses inexcusable? I know not what I write!—*That* servant in your way! * By the great God of Heaven, that servant *was not*, *dared not*, *could not*, be in your way!—Curse upon the cool caution that is pleaded to deprive me of an expectation so transporting!

And *are things drawing towards a crisis between your friends and you?*—Is not this a reason for me to expect, the *rather* to expect, the promised interview?

Can *I write all that is in my mind*, say you?—Impossible!—Not the hundredth part of what is in my mind, and in my apprehension, can I write!

Oh! the wavering, the changeable sex!—But can Miss Clarissa Harlowe—

Forgive me, Madam!—I know not what I write!

* See Letter XIX.

Yet, I must, I do, insist upon your promise—or that you will condescend to find better excuses for the failure—or convince me, that stronger reasons are imposed upon *you*, than those you offer.—A promise *once* given (upon *deliberation* given,) the *promised* only can dispense with; except in cases of a very apparent necessity imposed upon the *promiser*, which leaves no power to perform it.

The first promise you ever made me! Life and death perhaps depending upon it—my heart desponding from the barbarous methods resolved to be taken with you in malice to me!

You would sooner choose death than Solmes. (How my soul spurns the competition!) O my beloved creature, what are these but *words?—Whose* words?—Sweet and ever adorable—What?—Promise breaker—must I call you?—How shall I believe the asseveration, (your *supposed duty* in the question! Persecution so flaming!—Hatred to me so strongly avowed!) after this instance of your so lightly dispensing with your promise?

If, my dearest life! you would prevent my distraction, or, at least, distracted consequences, renew the promised hope!—My *fate* is indeed upon its crisis.

Forgive me, dearest creature, forgive me!—I know I have written in too much anguish of mind!—Writing this, in the same moment that the just dawning light has imparted to me the heavy disappointment.

I dare not re-peruse what I have written. I *must* deposit it. It may serve to shew you my distracted apprehension that this disappointment is but a prelude to the greatest of all.—Nor, having here any other paper, am I able to write again, if I would, on this gloomy spot. (Gloomy is my soul; and all Nature around me partakes of my gloom!)—I trust it therefore to your goodness—if its fervour excite your

displeasure rather than your pity, you wrong my passion; and I shall be ready to apprehend, that I am intended to be the sacrifice of more miscreants than one! [Have patience with me, dearest creature!—I mean Solmes and your brother only.] But if, exerting your usual generosity, you will excuse and *re-appoint*, may that God, whom you profess to serve, and who is the God of *truth* and of *promises*, protect and bless you, for both; and for restoring to himself, and to hope,

Your ever-adoring,
yet almost desponding,
LOVELACE!

Ivy Cavern, in the Coppice—
Day but just breaking.

This is the answer I shall return:

Wednesday Morning.

I AM amazed, Sir, at the freedom of your reproaches. Pressed and teased, against convenience and inclination, to give you a private meeting, am *I* to be thus challenged and upbraided, and my sex reflected upon, because I thought it prudent to change my mind?—A liberty I had reserved to myself, when I made the *appointment*, as you call it. I wanted not instances of your impatient spirit to other people: yet may it be happy for me, that I have this new one; which shows, that you can as little spare *me*, when I pursue the dictates of my own reason, as you do *others*, for acting up to theirs. Two motives you must be governed by in this excess. The one *my easiness;* the other *your own presumption*. Since you think you have found out the *first*, and have shown so much of the *last* upon it, I am too much alarmed, not to wish and desire, that

your letter of this day may conclude all the trouble you had from, or for,

Your humble servant,
Cl. Harlowe.

I believe, my dear, I may promise myself your approbation, whenever I write or speak with spirit, be it to whom it will. Indeed, I find but too much reason to exert it, since I have to deal with people, who govern themselves in their conduct to me, not by what is fit or decent, right or wrong, but by what they think my temper will bear. I have, till very lately, been praised for mine; but it has always been by those who never gave me opportunity to return the compliment to them. Some people have acted, as if they thought forbearance on *one side* absolutely necessary for them and me to be upon good terms together; and in this case have ever taken care rather to *owe* that obligation than to *lay* it. You have hinted to me, that resentment is not natural to my temper, and that therefore it must soon subside: it may be so with respect to my relations; but not to Mr. Lovelace, I assure you.

Wednesday Noon, March 29.

We cannot always answer for what we *can* do: but to convince you, that I can keep my above resolution, with regard to Mr. Lovelace, angry as my letter is, and three hours as it is since it was written, I assure you, that I repent it not; nor will soften it, although I find it is not taken away. And yet I hardly ever before did any thing in anger, that I did not repent in half an hour; and question myself in *less* than that time, whether I were right or wrong.

In this respite till Tuesday, I have a little time to look about me, as I may say, and to consider of what

I *have* to do, and *can* do. And Mr. Lovelace's insolence will make me go very home with myself. Not that I think I can conquer my aversion to Mr. Solmes. I am sure I cannot. But, if I absolutely break with Mr. Lovelace, and give my friends convincing proofs of it, who knows but they will restore me to their favour, and let their views in relation to the other man go off by degrees?—Or, at least, that I may be safe till my cousin Morden arrives: to whom, I think, I will write; and the rather, as Mr. Lovelace has assured me, that my friends have written to him to make good their side of the question.

But, with all my courage, I am exceedingly apprehensive about the Tuesday next, and about what may result from my steadfastness; for steadfast I am sure I shall be. They are resolved, I am told, to try every means to induce me to comply with what they are determined upon. And I am resolved to do all I can to avoid what they would force me to do. A dreadful contention between parents and child!—Each hoping to leave the other without excuse, whatever the consequence may be.

What can I do? Advise me, my dear. Something is strangely wrong somewhere! to make parents, the most indulgent till now, seem cruel in a child's eye; and a daughter, till within these few weeks, thought unexceptionably dutiful, appear, in their judgment, a rebel!—Oh! my ambitious and violent brother! What may he have to answer for to both!

Be pleased to remember, my dear, that your last favour was dated on Saturday. This is Wednesday: and none of mine have been taken away since. Don't let me want *your* advice. My situation is extremely difficult.—But I am sure you love me still: and not the less on *that* account. Adieu, my beloved friend.

Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XXI

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Morning, Day-break, March 30.

An accident, and not remissness, has occasioned my silence.

My mother was sent for on Sunday night by her cousin Larkin, whom I mentioned in one of my former, and who was extremely earnest to see her.

This poor woman was always afraid of death, and was one of those weak persons who imagine that the making of their will must be an undoubted forerunner of it.

She had always said, when urged to the necessary work, That whenever she made it, she should not live long after; and, one would think, imagined she was under an obligation to prove her words: for, though she had been long bed-rid, and was, in a manner, worn out before, yet she thought herself better, till she was persuaded to make it: and from that moment, remembering what she used to prognosticate, (her *fears*, *helping on what she feared*, as is often the case, particularly in the small-pox,) grew worse; and had it in her head once to burn her will, in hopes to grow better upon it.

She sent my mother word, that the doctors had given her over: but that she could not die till she saw her. I told my mother, That if she wished her a chance for recovery, she should not, for *that* reason, go. But go she would; and, what was worse, would make me go with her; and that, at an hour's warning; for she said nothing of it to me, till she was rising in the morning *early*, resolving to return *at night*. Had there been more time for argumentation, to be sure I had not gone; but as it was, there was a kind of

necessity that my preparation to obey her, should, in a manner, accompany her command.—A command so much out of the way, on such a solemn occasion! And this I represented: but to no purpose: There never was such a contradicting girl in the world—*My* wisdom always made *her* a fool!—But she *would* be obliged *this time*, proper or improper.

I have but one way of accounting for this sudden whim of my mother; and that is this—She had a mind to accept of Mr. Hickman's offer to escort her:—and I verily believe [I wish I were quite sure of it] had a mind to oblige him with *my* company—as far as I know, to keep me out of *worse*.

For, would you believe it?—as sure as you are alive, she is afraid for her favourite Hickman, because of the long visit your Lovelace, though so much by accident, made me in her absence, last time she was at the same place. I hope, my dear, *you* are not jealous too. But indeed I now-and-then, when she teases me with praises which Hickman cannot deserve, in return fall to praising those qualities and personalities in Lovelace, which the other never will have. Indeed I do love to tease a little bit, that I do.—My mamma's girl—I had like to have said.

As you know she is as passionate, as I am pert, you will not wonder to be told, that we generally fall out on these occasions. She flies from me, at the long run. It would be undutiful in me to leave her *first*—and then I get an opportunity to pursue our *correspondence*.

For, now I am rambling, let me tell you, that she does not much favour *that*;—for *two* reasons, I believe:—One, that I don't shew her all that passes between us; the other, that she thinks I harden your mind against your *duty*, as it is called. And with *her*, for a reason at *home*, as I have hinted more than once, parents

cannot do wrong; children cannot oppose, and be right. This obliges me now-and-then to *steal* an hour, as I may say, and not let her know how I am employed.

You may guess from what I have written, how averse I was to comply with such an unreasonable stretch of motherly authority. But it came to be a *test of duty;* so I was obliged to yield, though with a full persuasion of being in the right.

I have always your reproofs upon these occasions: in your late letters stronger than ever. A good reason why, you'll say, because more deserved than ever. I thank you kindly for your correction. I hope to make *correction* of it. But let me tell you, that your stripes, whether deserved or not, have made me sensible, deeper than the skin—but of this another time.

It was Monday afternoon before we reached the old lady's house. That fiddling, parading fellow [you know who I mean] made us wait for him two hours, and I to go a journey I disliked! only for the sake of having a little more tawdry upon his housings; which he had hurried his sadler to put on, to make him look fine, being to escort his dear Madam Howe, and her fair daughter. I told him, that I supposed he was afraid, that the double solemnity in the case (that of the visit to a dying woman, and that of his own countenance) would give him the appearance of an *undertaker;* to avoid which, he ran into as bad an extreme, and I doubted would be taken for a *mountebank*.

The man was confounded. He took it as strongly, as if his conscience gave assent to the justice of the remark: otherwise he would have borne it better; for he is used enough to this sort of treatment. I thought he would have cried. I have heretofore observed, that on *this* side of the contract, he seems to be a mighty

meek sort of creature. And though I should like it in him *hereafter* perhaps, yet I can't help despising him a little in my heart for it *now*. I believe, my dear, we all love your blustering fellows best; could we but direct the bluster, and bid it roar when and at whom we pleased.

The poor man looked at my mother. She was so angry, (my airs upon it, and my opposition to the journey, have all helped,) that for half the way she would not speak to me. And when she did, it was, I wish I had not brought you! You know not what it is to condescend. It is *my* fault, not Mr. *Hickman*'s, that you are here so much against your will. Have you no eyes for this side of the chariot?

And then he fared the better from *her*, as he always does, for faring worse from *me:* for there was, How do you *now*, Sir? And how do you *now*, Mr. Hickman? as he ambled now on this side of the chariot, now on that, stealing a prim look at me; *her* head half out of the chariot, kindly smiling, as if married to the man but a fortnight herself: while I always saw something to divert myself on the side of the chariot where the honest man was not, were it but old Robin at a distance, on his roan Keffel.

Our courtship-days, they say, are our best days. Favour destroys courtship. Distance increases it. Its essence is distance. And, to see how familiar these men-wretches grow upon a smile, what an awe they are struck into when we frown; who would not make them stand off? Who would not enjoy a power, that is to be short-lived?

Don't chide me one bit for this, my dear. It is in nature. I can't help it. Nay, for that matter, I love it, and wish not to help it. So spare your gravity, I beseech you on this subject. I set not up for a perfect character. The man will bear it. And what need

you care? My mother overbalances all he suffers: And if he thinks himself unhappy, he ought never to be otherwise.

Then did he not deserve a fit of the sullens, think you, to make us lose our dinner for his parade, since in so short a journey my mother would not bait, and lose the opportunity of coming back that night, had the old lady's condition permitted it? To say nothing of being the cause, that my mamma was in the glout with her poor daughter all the way.

At our alighting I gave him another dab; but it was but a little one. Yet the manner, and the air, made up (as I intended they should) for that defect. My mother's hand was kindly put into his, with a simpering altogether bridal; and with another How do you now, Sir?—All his plump muscles were in motion, and a double charge of care and obsequiousness fidgetted up his whole form, when he offered to me his officious palm. My mother, when I was a girl, always bid me hold up my head. I just then remembered her commands, and was dutiful—I never held up my head so high. With an averted supercilious eye, and a rejecting hand, half flourishing—I have no need of help, Sir!—You are in my way.

He ran back, as if on wheels; with a face excessively mortified: I had thoughts else to have followed the too-gentle touch, with a declaration, that I had as many hands and feet as himself. But this would have been telling him a piece of news, as to the latter, that I hope he had not the presumption to guess at.

We found the poor woman, as we thought, at the last gasp. Had we come *sooner*, we could not have got away as we intended, that night. You see I am for excusing the man all I can; and yet, I assure you,

I have not so much as a *conditional liking* to him. My mother sat up most part of the night, expecting every hour would have been her poor cousin's last. I bore her company till two.

I never saw the approaches of death in a grown person before; and was extremely shocked. Death, to one in health, is a very terrible thing. We pity the person for what *she* suffers: and we pity ourselves for what *we* must some time hence in like sort suffer; and so are *doubly* affected.

She held out till *Tuesday* morning, eleven. As she had told my mother that she had left her an executrix, and her and me rings and mourning; we were employed all that day in matters of the will [by which, by the way, my cousin Jenny Fynnett is handsomely provided for], so that it was Wednesday morning early, before we could set out on our return.

It is true, we got home (having no housings to stay for) by noon: but though I sent Robin away before he dismounted, (who brought me back a whole packet, down to the same Wednesday noon,) yet was I really so fatigued, and shocked, as I must own, at the hard death of the old lady; my mother likewise (who has no reason to dislike this world) being indisposed from the same occasion; that I could not set about writing time enough for Robin's return that night.

But having recruited my spirits, my mother having also had a good night, I arose with the dawn, to write this, and get it dispatched time enough for your breakfast airing; that your suspense might be as short as possible.

I will soon follow this with another. I will employ a person directly to find out how Lovelace behaves himself at his inn. Such a busy spirit must be traceable.

But, perhaps, my dear, you are indifferent *now* about him, or his employments; for this request was made before he *mortally* offended you. Nevertheless, I will have inquiry made. The result, it is very probable, will be of use to confirm you in your present unforgiving temper.—And yet, if the *poor* man [shall I pity him for *you*, my dear?] should be deprived of the greatest blessing any man on earth can receive, and to which he has the presumption, with so little merit, to aspire; he will have run great risks; caught great colds; hazarded fevers; sustained the highest indignities; braved the inclemencies of skies, and all for—*nothing!*—Will not this move your *generosity* (if nothing else) in his favour! —Poor Mr. Lovelace!—

I would occasion no throb; nor half-throb; no flash of sensibility, like lightning darting in, and as soon suppressed by a discretion that no one of the sex ever before could give such an example of—I *would not*, I say; and yet, for a trial of *you* to *yourself*, rather than as an impertinent overflow of raillery in your friend, as money-takers try a suspected guinea by the *sound*, let me on such a supposition, sound *you*, by repeating, *poor Mr. Lovelace!*

And now, my dear, how is it with you? How do you now, as my mother says to Mr. Hickman, when her pert daughter has made him look sorrowful?

LETTER XXII

MR. HICKMAN, TO MRS. HOWE

Wednesday, March 29.

MADAM,

It is with infinite regret that I think myself obliged, by pen and ink, to repeat my apprehensions,

that it is impossible for me ever to obtain a share in the affections of your beloved daughter. O that it were not too evident to every one, as well as to myself, even to our very servants, that my love for her, and my assiduities, expose me rather to her scorn [forgive me, Madam, the hard word!] than to the treatment due to a man whose proposals have met with your approbation, and who loves her above all the women in the world!

Well might the merit of my passion be doubted, if, like Mr. Solmes to the truly-admirable Miss Clarissa Harlowe, I could continue my addresses to Miss Howe's distaste. Yet what will not the discontinuance cost me!

Give me leave, nevertheless, dearest, worthiest Lady, to repeat, what I told you, on Monday night, at Mrs. Larkin's, with a heart even bursting with grief, That I wanted not the treatment of that day to convince me, that I am not, nor ever can be, the object of Miss Howe's voluntary favour. What hopes can there be, that a lady will ever esteem, as a husband, the man, whom, as a lover, she despises? Will not every act of obligingness from such a one, be construed an unmanly tameness of spirit, and entitle him the more to her disdain?—My heart is full: Forgive me, if I say, that Miss Howe's treatment of me does no credit either to her education, or fine sense.

Since, then, it is too evident, that she cannot esteem me; and since, as I have heard it justly observed by the excellent Miss Clarissa Harlowe, that love is not a voluntary passion; would it not be ungenerous to subject the dear daughter to the displeasure of a mother so justly fond of her; and you, Madam, while you are so good as to interest yourself in my favour, to uneasiness? And why, were I even to be sure, at last, of succeeding by means of your kind partiality to me, should I wish to make the best-beloved of my soul unhappy; since

mutual must be our happiness, or misery for life the consequence to both?

My best wishes will for ever attend the dear, the ever-dear lady! may her nuptials be happy! they must be so, if she marry the man she can honour with her love. Yet I will say, that whoever be the happy, the thrice-happy man, he never can love her with a passion more ardent and more sincere than mine.

Accept, dear Madam, of my most grateful thanks for a distinction that has been the only support of my presumption in an address I am obliged, as utterly hopeless, to discontinue. A distinction, on which (and not on my own merits) I had entirely relied; but which, I find, can avail me nothing. To the last hour of my life, it will give pleasure to think, that had your favour, your recommendation, been of sufficient weight to conquer what seems to be an invincible aversion, I had been the happiest of men.

I am, dear Madam, with inviolable respect,
your ever obliged and faithful
humble servant,
CHARLES HICKMAN.

LETTER XXIII

MRS. HOWE, TO CHARLES HICKMAN, ESQ.

Thursday, March 30.

I CANNOT but say, Mr. Hickman, but you have cause to be dissatisfied—to be out of humour—to be displeased—with Nancy—but, upon my word; but indeed—What shall I say?—Yet this I will say, that you *good* young gentlemen know nothing at all of our sex. Shall I tell you—but why should I? And yet I will say, that if Nancy did not think well of you

upon the main, she is too generous to treat you so freely as she does.—Don't you think she has courage enough to tell me, she would not see you, and to refuse at any time seeing you, as she knows on what account you come, if she had not something in her head favourable to you?—Fie! that I am forced to say thus much in writing, when I have hinted it to you twenty and twenty times by word of mouth!

But if you are so indifferent, Mr. Hickman—if you think you can part with her for her skittish tricks—if *my* interest in your favour—Why, Mr. Hickman, I must tell you, that my Nancy is worth bearing with. If she be *foolish*—what is that owing to?—Is it not to her *wit?* Let me tell you, Sir, you cannot have the convenience without the inconvenience. What workman loves not a sharp tool to work with? But is there not more danger from a sharp tool than from a blunt one? And what workman will throw away a sharp tool, because it may cut his fingers? Wit may be likened to a sharp tool. And there is something very pretty in wit, let me tell you. Often and often have I been forced to smile at her arch turns upon me, when I could have beat her for them. And, pray, don't I bear a great deal from her?—And why? because I love her. And would you not wish me to judge of your love for her by my own? And would not you bear with her?—Don't you love her (what though with another sort of love?) as well as I do? I do assure you, Sir, that if I thought you did not—Well, but it is plain that you don't!—And is it plain that you don't?—Well, then, you must do as you think best.

Well might the merit of your passion be doubted, you say, if, like Mr. Solmes—fiddle-faddle!—Why, you are a captious man, I think!—Has Nancy been so plain in her repulses of you as Miss Clary Harlowe has been to Mr. Solmes?—Does Nancy love any man

better than you, although she may not shew so much love to you as you wish for?—If she did, let me tell you, she would have let us all hear of it.—What idle comparisons then!

But it may be you are tired out. It may be you have seen somebody else—it may be you would wish to change mistresses with that gay wretch Mr. Lovelace. It may be too, that, in that case, Nancy would not be sorry to change lovers—The *truly-admirable* Miss Clarissa Harlowe! and the *excellent* Miss Clarissa Harlowe!—Good lack!—but take care, Mr. Hickman, that you do not praise any woman living, let her be as admirable and as excellent as she will, above your own mistress. No polite man will do that, surely. And take care too, that you do not make her or me think you are in earnest in your anger—just though it may be, as anger only—I would not for a thousand pounds, that Nancy should know that you can so easily part with her, if you have the love for her which you declare you have. Be sure, if you are not absolutely determined, that you do not so much as whisper the contents of this your letter to your own heart, as I may say.

Her treatment of you, you say, does no credit either to her education or fine sense. Very home put, truly! Nevertheless, so say I. But is not hers the disgrace, more than yours? I can assure you, that every body blames her for it. And *why* do they blame her?—Why? because they think you merit better treatment at her hands: And is not this to your credit? Who but pities *you*, and blames *her*? Do the servants, who, as you observe, see her skittish airs, disrespect you for them? Do they not, at such times, look concerned for you? Are they not then doubly officious in their respects and services to you?—I have observed, with pleasure, that they are.

But you are afraid you shall be thought tame, perhaps, when married. That you shall not be thought *manly* enough, I warrant!—And this was poor Mr. Howe's fear. And many a tug did this lordly fear cost us both, God knows!—Many more than needed, I am sure:—and more than ought to have been, had he known how to *bear and forbear;* as is the duty of those who pretend to have most sense—And, pray, which would you have to have most sense, the woman or the man?

Well, Sir, and now what remains, if you really love Nancy so well as you say you do?—Why, I leave that to you. You may, if you please, come to breakfast with me in the morning. But with no *full heart*, nor resenting looks, I advise you; except you can brave it out. That have I, when provoked, done many a time with my *husband*, but never did I get any thing by it with my *daughter:* much less will you. Of which, for your observation, I thought fit to advise you. As from

Your friend,
ANNABELLA HOWE.

LETTER XXIV

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Morning.

I WILL now take some notice of your last favour. But being so far behind-hand with you, must be brief.

In the first place, as to your reproofs, thus shall I discharge myself of that part of my subject. Is it likely, think you, that I should avoid deserving them now-and-then, occasionally, when I admire the manner in which you give me your rebukes, and love you the

better for them? And when you are so well *entitled* to give them? For what faults can *you* possibly have, unless your relations are so kind as to find you a *few* to keep their *many* in countenance?—But they are as kind to *me* in this, as to *you;* for I may venture to affirm, That any one who should read *your* letters, and would say you were *right*, would not on reading *mine*, condemn me for them *quite wrong*.

Your resolution not to leave your father's house is right—if you can stay in it, and avoid being Solmes's wife.

I think you answered Solmes's letter, as *I* should have answered it.—Will you not compliment me and yourself at once, by saying, *that* was right?

You have, in your letters to your uncle and the rest, done all that you ought to do. You are wholly guiltless of the consequence, be it what it will. To offer to give up your estate!—That would not I have done! You see this offer staggered them: they took time to consider of it. They made my heart ache in the time they took. I was afraid they would have taken you at your word: and so, but for shame, and for fear of Lovelace, I dare say they would. You are too noble for them. This, I repeat, is an offer *I* would not have made. Let me beg of you, my dear, never to repeat the temptation to them.

I freely own to you, that their usage of you upon it, and Lovelace's different treatment of you * in his letter received at the same time, would have made *me* his, past redemption. The duce take the man, I was going to say, for not having had so much regard to his character and morals, as would have entirely justified such a step in a CLARISSA, persecuted as she is!

I wonder not at your appointment with him. I may further touch upon some part of this subject by-and-by.

* See Letter XVIII.

Pray—pray—I pray you now, my dearest friend, contrive to send your Betty Barnes to me!—Does the Coventry Act extend to women, know ye?—The *least* I will do, shall be, to send her home well soused in and dragged through our deepest horsepond. I'll engage, if I get her hither, that she will keep the anniversary of her deliverance as long as she lives.

I wonder not at Lovelace's saucy answer, saucy as it really is.* If he loves you as he ought, he must be vexed at so great a disappointment. The man must have been a detestable hypocrite, I think, had he not shown his vexation. Your expectations of such a christian command of temper in him, in a disappointment of this nature especially, are too early by almost half a century in a man of his constitution. But nevertheless I am very far from blaming you for your resentment.

I shall be all impatience to know how this matter ends between you and him. But a *few inches of brick wall* between you so lately; and now such *mountains?* —And you think to hold it?—May be so!

You see, you say, that the temper he shewed in his letter was not *natural* to him. And did you before think it *was?* Wretched creepers and insinuators! Yet when opportunity serves, as insolent encroachers! —This very Hickman, I make no doubt, would be as saucy as your Lovelace, if he dared. He has not half the arrogant bravery of the other, and can better hide his horns; that's all. But whenever he has the power, depend upon it, he will *butt* at one as valiantly as the other.

If ever I should be persuaded to have him, I shall watch how the obsequious lover *goes off;* and how the imperative husband *comes upon him;* in short, how he *ascends*, and how I *descend*, in the matrimonial wheel,

* See Letter XX.

never to take my turn again, but by fits and starts like the feeble struggles of a sinking state for its dying liberty.

All good-natured men are passionate, says Mr. Lovelace. A pretty plea to a beloved object in the plenitude of her power! As much as to say, 'Greatly as I value you, Madam, I will not take pains to curb my passions to oblige you'—Methinks I should be glad to hear from Mr. Hickman such a plea for good nature as this.

Indeed, we are too apt to make allowances for such tempers as *early* indulgence has made uncontroulable; and therefore habitually evil. But if a boisterous temper, when under *obligation*, is to be thus allowed for, what, when the tables are turned, will it expect? You know a husband, who, I fancy, had some of these early allowances made for him: and you see that neither himself nor any body else is the happier for it.

The suiting of the tempers of two persons who are to come together, is a great matter: and there should be boundaries fixed between them, by consent as it were, beyond which neither should go: and each should hold the other to it; or there would probably be encroachment in both. To illustrate my assertion by a very high, and by a more manly (as some would think it) than womanly instance—if the boundaries of the three estates that constitute our political union were not known, and occasionally asserted, what would become of the prerogatives and privileges of each? The two branches of the legislature would encroach upon each other; and the executive power would swallow up both.

But if two persons of discretion, you'll say, come together—

Ay, my dear, that's true: but, if none but persons

of discretion were to marry—And would it not surprise you if I were to advance, that the persons of discretion are generally single?—Such persons are apt to consider too much, to resolve.—Are not you and I complimented as such?—And would either of us marry, if the fellows and our friends would let us alone?

But to the former point;—had Lovelace made his addresses to me, (unless indeed I had been taken with a liking for him *more* than *conditional*,) I would have forbid him, upon the first *passionate* instance of his *good-nature*, as he calls it, ever to see me more: 'Thou must bear with me, honest friend, might I have said [had I condescended to say any thing to him] an hundred times more than this:—Begone, therefore!—I bear with no passions that are predominant to that thou hast pretended for me!'

But to one of your mild and gentle temper, it would be all one, were you married, whether the man were a Lovelace or a Hickman in his spirit.—You are so obediently principled, that perhaps you would have told a mild man, that he must not *entreat*, but *command;* and that it was beneath him not to exact from you the obedience you had so solemnly vowed to him at the altar.—I know of old, my dear, your meek regard to that little piddling part of the marriage-vow which some prerogative-monger foisted into the office, to make that a *duty*, which he knew was not a *right*.

Our way of training-up, you say, *makes us need the protection of the brave*. Very true: And how extremely brave and gallant is it, that this brave man will free us from all insults but those which will go nearest to our hearts; that is to say, his own!

How artfully has Lovelace, in the abstract you give me of one of his letters, calculated to your meridian! *Generous spirits hate compulsion!*—He is certainly a

deeper creature by much than once we thought him. He knows, as you intimate, that his own wild pranks cannot be concealed: and so owns just enough to palliate (because it teaches you not to be surprised at) any new one, that may come to your ears; and then, truly, he is, however faulty, a mighty *ingenuous* man; and by no means an *hypocrite:* a character the most odious of all others, to *our sex*, in a lover, and the least to be forgiven, were it only because, when detected, it makes us doubt the justice of those praises which we are willing to believe he thought to be our due.

By means of this supposed *ingenuity*, Lovelace obtains a praise, instead of a merited dispraise; and, like an absolved confessionaire, wipes off as he goes along one score, to begin another: for an eye favourable to him will not see his faults through a magnifying glass; nor will a woman, willing to *hope the best*, forbear to impute it to ill-will and prejudice all that charity can make so imputable. And if she even give credit to such of the unfavourable imputations as may be too flagrant to be doubted, she will be very apt to take in the *future hope*, which he inculcates, and which to question would be to question her own power, and perhaps *merit:* and thus may a woman be inclined to make a *slight*, even a *fancied* merit atone for the most *glaring* vice.

I have a reason, a new one, for this preachment upon a text you have given me. But, till I am better informed, I will not explain myself. If it come out, as I shrewdly suspect it will, the man, my dear, is a devil; and you must rather think of—I protest I had like to have said *Solmes* than him.

But let this be as it will, shall I tell you, how, after all his offences, he may creep in with you again?

I will. Thus then: It is but to claim for himself the *good-natured character:* and this, granted, will blot

out the fault of *passionate* insolence: and so he will have nothing to do, but this hour to accustom you to insult; the next, to bring you to forgive him, upon his submission: the consequence must be, that he will, by this teazing, break your resentment all to pieces: and then, a little *more* of the insult, and a little *less* of the submission, on his part, will go down, till nothing else but the *first* will be seen, and not a bit of the *second*. You will then be afraid to provoke so offensive a spirit: and at last will be brought so *prettily*, and so *audibly*, to pronounce the little reptile word OBEY, that it will do one's heart good to hear you. The *Muscovite* wife then takes place of the *managed* mistress. And if you doubt the progression, be pleased, my dear, to take your mother's judgment upon it.

But no more of this just now. Your situation is become too critical to permit me to dwell upon these sort of topics. And yet this is but an *affected levity* with me. My heart, as I have heretofore said, is a sincere sharer in all your distresses. My sun-shine darts but through a drizly cloud. My eye, were you to see it, when it seems to you so *gladdened*, as you mentioned in a former, is *more* than ready to overflow, even at the very passages perhaps upon which you impute to me the *archness* of *exultation*.

But now the unheard-of cruelty and perverseness of some of your friends [*relations*, I should say—I am always blundering thus!] the *as* strange determinedness of others; your present quarrel with Lovelace; and your approaching interview with Solmes, from which you are right to apprehend a great deal; are such considerable circumstances in your story, that it is fit they should engross all my attention.

You ask me to advise you how to behave upon Solmes's visit. I *cannot* for my life. I know they expect a great deal from it: you had not else had

your long day complied with. All I will say is, That if Solmes cannot be prevailed for, now that Lovelace has so much offended you, he never will. When the interview is over, I doubt not but that I shall have reason to say, that all you did, that all you said, was right, and could not be better: yet, if I don't think so, I won't say so; that I promise you.

Only let me advise you to pull up a spirit, even to your uncle, if there be occasion. Resent the vile and foolish treatment you meet with, in which he has taken so large a share, and make him ashamed of it, if you can.

I know not, upon recollection, but this interview may be a good thing for you, however designed. For when Solmes sees (if that be to *be* so) that it is impossible he should succeed with you; and your relations see it too; the one must, I think, recede, and the other come to terms with you, upon offers, that it is my opinion, will go hard enough with you to comply with; when the *still* harder are dispensed with.

There are several passages in your last letters, as well as in your former, which authorise me to say this. But it would be unseasonable to touch this subject farther just now.

But, upon the whole, I have no patience to see you thus made the sport of your brother's and sister's cruelty: For what, after *so much steadiness* on your part, in *so many trials*, can be their hope? *except indeed it be to drive you to extremity, and to ruin you in the opinion of your uncles as well as father.*

I urge you by all means to send out of their reach all the letters and papers you would not have them see. Methinks, I would wish you to deposit likewise a parcel of clothes, linen, and the like, before your interview with Solmes: lest you should not have an

opportunity for it afterwards. Robin shall fetch it away on the first orders by day or by night.

I am in hopes to procure from my mother, if things come to extremity, leave for you to be privately with us.

I will condition to be good-humoured, and even *kind*, to HER favourite, if she will shew me an indulgence that shall make me serviceable to MINE.

This alternative has been a good while in my head. But as your foolish uncle has so strangely attached my mother to their views, I cannot promise that I shall succeed as I wish.

Do not absolutely despair, however. What though the contention will be between *woman* and *woman?* I fancy I shall be able to manage it, by the help of a little *female perseverance*. Your quarrel with Lovelace, if it continue, will strengthen my hands. And the offers you made in your answer to your uncle Harlowe's letter of Sunday night last, *duly dwelt upon*, must add force to my pleas.

I depend upon your forgiveness of all the perhaps unseasonable flippancies of your naturally too lively, yet most sincerely sympathizing,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday, March 31.

You have very kindly accounted for your silence. People in misfortune are always in doubt. They are too apt to turn even unavoidable accidents into slights and neglects; especially in those whose favourable opinion they wish to preserve.

I am sure I ought evermore to exempt my Anna Howe from the supposed possibility of her becoming one of those who bask only in the sun-shine of a friend: but nevertheless her friendship is too precious to me, not to doubt my own merits on the one hand, and not to be anxious for the preservation of it, on the other.

You so generously gave me liberty to chide you, that I am afraid of taking it, because I could sooner mistrust my own judgment, than that of a beloved friend, whose ingenuousness in acknowledging an *imputed* error seems to set her above the commission of a *wilful* one. This makes me half-afraid to ask you, if you think you are not too cruel, too *ungenerous* shall I say? in your behaviour to a man who loves you so dearly, and is so worthy and so sincere a man?

Only it is by you, or I should be ashamed to be outdone in that true magnanimity, which makes one thankful for the wounds given by a true friend. I believe I was guilty of a petulance, which nothing but my uneasy situation can excuse; if *that* can. I am almost *afraid* to beg of you, and yet I repeatedly *do*, to give way to that charming spirit, whenever it rises to your pen, which smiles, yet goes to the quick of my fault. What patient shall be afraid of a probe in so delicate a hand?—I say, I am almost afraid to pray you to give way to it, for fear you should, for that very reason, restrain it. For the edge may be taken off, if it does not make the subject of its raillery wince a little. *Permitted* or *desired* satire may be apt, in a generous satirist, mending as it rallies, to turn too soon into panegyric. Yours is intended to instruct; and though it bites, it pleases at the same time: no fear of a wound's wrankling or festering by so delicate a point as you carry; not envenomed by *personality*, not intending to expose, or ridicule, or exasperate. The most admired of our moderns know nothing of this art:

Why? Because it must be founded in good nature, and directed by a right heart. The *man*, not the *fault*, is generally the subject of *their* satire: and were it to be *just*, how should it be *useful;* how should it answer any good purpose; when every gash (for their weapon is a broad sword, not a lancet) lets in the air of public ridicule, and exasperates where it should heal? Spare me not therefore because I am your *friend.* For *that* very reason spare me not. I may *feel* your edge, fine as it is. I may be pained: you would lose your end if I were not: but after the first sensibility (as I have said more than once before) I will love you the better, and my amended heart shall be all yours; and it will then be more worthy to be yours.

You have taught me what to say to, and what to think of, Mr. Lovelace. You have, by agreeable anticipation, let me know how it is probable he will apply to me to be excused. I will lay every thing before you that shall pass on the occasion, if he *do* apply, that I may take your advice, when it can come in time; and when it cannot, that I may receive your correction, or approbation, as I may happen to merit either.—Only one thing must be allowed for me; that whatever course I shall be *permitted* or be *forced* to steer, I must be considered as a person out of her own direction. Tost to and fro by the high winds of passionate controul, (and, as I think, unseasonable severity,) I behold the desired port, the *single state*, into which I would fain steer; but am kept off by the foaming billows of a brother's and sister's envy, and by the raging winds of a supposed invaded authority; while I see in Lovelace, the rocks on one hand, and in Solmes, the sands on the other; and tremble, lest I should split upon the former, or strike upon the latter.

But you, my better pilot, to what a charming hope do you bid me aspire, if things come to extremity!—I

will not, as you caution me, too much depend upon your success with your mother in my favour; for well I know her high notions of implicit duty in a child: but yet I will *hope* too; because her seasonable protection may save me perhaps from a greater rashness: and in this case, she shall direct me in all my ways: I will do nothing but by her orders, and by her advice and yours: not see any body: not write to any body: nor shall any living soul, but by her direction and yours, know where I am. In any cottage place me, I will never stir out, unless, disguised as your servant, I am now-and-then permitted an evening-walk with you: and this private protection to be granted for no longer time than till my cousin Morden comes; which, as I hope, cannot be long.

I am afraid I must not venture to take the hint you give me, to deposit some of my clothes; although I will some of my linen, as well as papers.

I will tell you why—Betty had for some time been very curious about my wardrobe, whenever I took out any of my things before her.

Observing this, I once, on taking one of my garden-airings, left my keys in the locks: and on my return surprised the creature with her hand upon the keys, as if shutting the door.

She was confounded at my sudden coming back. I took no notice: but on her retiring, I found my cloaths were not in the usual order.

I doubted not, upon this, that her curiosity was owing to the orders she had received; and being afraid they would abridge me of my airings, if their suspicions were not obviated, it has ever since been my custom (among other contrivances) not only to leave my keys in the locks, but to employ the wench now-and-then in taking out my cloaths, suit by suit, on pretence of preventing their being rumpled or creased, and to see

that the flowered silver suit did not tarnish: sometimes declaredly to give myself employment, having little else to do. With which employment (superadded to the delight taken by the low as well as by the high of our sex in seeing fine cloaths) she seemed always, I thought, as well pleased as if it answered one of the offices she had in charge.

To this, and to the confidence they have in a spy so diligent, and to their knowing that I have not one confidant in a family in which nevertheless I believe every servant loves me; nor have attempted to make one; I suppose, I owe the freedom I enjoy of my airings: and perhaps (finding I make no movements towards going away) they are the more secure, that I shall at last be prevailed upon to comply with their measures: since they must think, that, otherwise, they give me provocation enough to take some rash step, in order to free myself from a treatment so disgraceful; and which [God forgive me, if I judge amiss!] *I am afraid my brother and sister would not be sorry to drive me to take.*

If, therefore, such a step should become necessary, (which I yet hope will not,) I must be contented to go away with the clothes I shall have on at the time. My custom to be dressed for the day, as soon as breakfast is over, when I have had no household employments to prevent me, will make such a step (if I am forced to take it) less suspected. And the linen I shall deposit, in pursuance of your kind hint, cannot be missed.

This custom, although a prisoner, (as I may too truly say,) and neither visited nor visiting, I continue. We owe to ourselves, and to our *sex*, you know, to be always neat; and never to be surprised in a way we should be pained to be seen in.

Besides, people in adversity (which is the state of

trial of every good quality) should endeavour to preserve laudable customs, that, if sun-shine return, they may not be losers by their trial.

Does it not, moreover, manifest a firmness of mind, in an unhappy person, to keep hope alive? To *hope* for better days, is half to *deserve* them: for could we have just ground for such a hope, if we did not resolve to deserve what that hope bids us aspire to?—Then who shall befriend a person who forsakes herself?

These are reflections by which I sometimes endeavour to support myself.

I know you don't despise my *grave airs*, although (with a view no doubt to irradiate my mind in my misfortunes) you rally me upon them. Every body has not your talent of introducing serious and important lessons, in such a happy manner as at once to delight and instruct.

What a multitude of contrivances may not young people fall upon, if the mind be not engaged by acts of kindness and condescension! I am not used by my friends of late as I always used their servants.

When I was intrusted with the family-management, I always found it right, as well in policy as generosity, to repose a trust in them. Not to seem to expect or depend upon justice from them, is in a manner to bid them take opportunities, whenever they offer, to be unjust.

Mr. Solmes, (to expatiate on this low, but not unuseful subject,) in his more trifling solicitudes, would have had a sorry key-keeper in me. Were I mistress of a family, I would not either take to myself, or give to servants, the pain of keeping those I had reason to suspect. People low in station have often minds not sordid. Nay, I have sometimes thought, that (even take number for number) there are more *honest low people*, than *honest high*. In the one, honesty is their

chief pride. In the other, the love of power, of grandeur, of pleasure, mislead; and that and their ambition induce a paramount pride, which too often swallows up the more laudable one.

Many of the former would scorn to deceive a confidence. But I have seen, among the most ignorant of their class, a susceptibility of resentment, if their honesty has been suspected: and have more than once been forced to put a servant *right*, whom I have heard say, that, although she valued herself upon her *honesty*, no master or mistress should suspect her for nothing.

How far has the comparison I had in my head, between my friends treatment of *me*, and my treatment of their *servants*, carried me!—But we always allowed ourselves to expatiate on such subjects, whether low or high, as might tend to enlarge our minds, or mend our management, whether notional or practical, and whether such expatiating respected our present, or might respect our probable future situations.

What I was principally leading to, was to tell you how ingenious I am in my contrivances and pretences to blind my gaoleress, and to take off the jealousy of her principals on my going down so often into the garden and poultry-yard. People suspiciously treated are never I believe at a loss for invention. Sometimes I want *air*, and am better the moment I am out of my chamber.—Sometimes *spirits;* and then my bantams and pheasants or the cascade divert me; the former, by their inspiriting liveliness; the latter, more solemnly, by its echoing dashings, and hollow murmurs.—Sometimes, solitude is of all things my wish; and the awful silence of the night, the spangled element, and the rising and setting sun, how promotive of contemplation!—Sometimes, when I intend nothing, and expect no letters, I am officious to take Betty with me; and at others,

bespeak her attendance, when I know she is otherwise employed, and cannot give it me.

These more capital artifices I branch out into lesser ones, without number. Yet *all* have not only the face of truth, but are real truths; although not my principal motive. How prompt a thing is *will!*—What impediments does *dislike* furnish!—How swiftly, through every difficulty, do we move with the one!—how tardily with the other!—every trifling obstruction weighing us down, as if lead were fastened to our feet!

Friday Morning, Eleven o'clock.

I have already made up my parcel of linen. My heart ached all the time I was employed about it; and still aches, at the thoughts of its being a necessary precaution.

When the parcel comes to your hands, as I hope it safely will, you will be pleased to open it. You will find in it two parcels sealed up; one of which contains the letters you have not yet seen; being those written since I left you: in the other are all the letters and copies of letters that have passed between you and me since I was last with you; with some other papers on subjects so much above me, that I cannot wish them to be seen by any body whose indulgence I am not so sure of, as I am of yours. If my judgment ripen with my years, perhaps I may review them.

Mrs. Norton used to say, from her reverend father, that youth was the time of life for *imagination* and *fancy* to work in: then, were a writer to lay by his works till *riper years* and *experience* should direct the fire rather to *glow*, than to *flame out*; something between both might perhaps be produced that would not displease a judicious eye.

In a third division, folded up separately, are all Mr.

Lovelace's letters written to me since he was forbidden this house, and copies of my answers to them. I expect that you will break the seals of this parcel, and when you have perused them all, give me your free opinion of my conduct.

By the way, not a line from that man!—Not *one* line! Wednesday I deposited mine. It remained there on Wednesday night. What time it was taken away yesterday I cannot tell: for I did not concern myself about it, till towards night; and then it was not there. No return at ten this day. I suppose he is as much out of humour as I.—With all my heart.

He may be mean enough perhaps, if ever I should put it into his *power*, to avenge himself for the trouble he has had with me.—But that now, I dare say, I never shall.

I see what sort of a man the encroacher is. And I hope we are equally sick of one another.—My heart is *vexedly* easy, if I may so describe it.—*Vexedly*—because of the apprehended interview with Solmes, and the consequences it may be attended with: or else I should be *quite* easy; for why? I have not *deserved* the usage I receive: and could I be rid of Solmes, as I presume I am of Lovelace, *their* influence over my father, mother, and uncles, against me, could not hold.

The five guineas tied up in one corner of a handkerchief under the linen, I beg you will let pass as an acknowledgment for the trouble I give your trusty servant. You must not chide me for this. You know I cannot be easy unless I have my way in these little matters.

I was going to put up what little money I have, and some of my ornaments; but they are portable, and I cannot forget them. Besides, should they (suspecting me) desire to see any of the jewels, and were I not able to produce them, it would amount to a demon-

stration of an intention which would have a guilty appearance to them.

Friday, One o'clock, in the Wood-house.

No letter yet from this man! I have luckily deposited my parcel, and have your letter of last night. If Robert take this without the parcel, pray let him return immediately for it. But he cannot miss it, I think; and must conclude that it is put there for him to take away. You may believe, from the contents of yours, that I shall immediately write again.—

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXVI

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Night, March 30.

THE fruits of my inquiry after your abominable wretch's behaviour and baseness at the paltry alehouse, which he calls an inn, prepare to hear.

Wrens and sparrows are not too ignoble a quarry for this villanous gos-hawk!—His assiduities; his watchings; his nightly risques; the inclement weather he journeys in; must not be all placed to *your* account. He has opportunities of making every thing light to him of that sort. A sweet pretty girl, I am told—innocent till he went thither—Now! (Ah! poor girl!) who knows what?

But just turned of seventeen!—His friend and brother-rake (a man of humour and intrigue) as I am told, to share the social bottle with. And sometimes another disguised rake or two. No sorrow comes near their hearts. Be not disturbed, my dear, at his *hoarse-*

nesses! his pretty Betsey, his Rosebud, as the vile wretch calls her, can *bear* all he says.

He is very fond of her. They say she is innocent even yet—her father, her grandmother, believe her to be so. He is to fortune her out to a young lover!—Ah! the poor young lover!—Ah! the poor simple girl!

Mr. Hickman tells me, that he heard in town, that he used to be often at plays, and at the opera, with women; and every time with a different one—Ah! my sweet friend!—But I hope he is nothing to you, if all this were truth.—But this intelligence, in relation to this poor girl, will do his business, if you had been ever so good friends before.

A vile wretch! Cannot such purity in pursuit, in view, restrain him? but I leave him to you!—There can be no hope of him. More of a fool, than of such a man. Yet I wish I may be able to snatch the poor young creature out of his villanous paws. I have laid a scheme to do so; if *indeed* she be hitherto innocent and heart-free.

He appears to the people as a military man, in disguise, secreting himself on account of a duel fought in town; the adversary's life in suspense. They believe he is a great man. His friend passes for an inferior officer; upon a footing of freedom with him. He, accompanied by a third man, who is a sort of subordinate companion to the second. The wretch himself with but one servant.

O my dear! how pleasantly can these devils, as I must call them, pass their time, while our gentle bosoms heave with pity for their supposed sufferings for us!

I have sent for this girl and her father; and am just now informed, that I shall see them. I will sift them

thoroughly. I shall soon find out such a simple thing as this, if he has not corrupted her already—and if he has, I shall soon find that out too.—If more art than nature appears either in her or her father, I shall give them both up—but depend upon it, the girl's undone.

He is said to be fond of her. He places her at the upper end of his table. He sets her a-prattling. He keeps his friends at a distance from her. She prates away. He admires for nature all she says. Once was heard to call her charming little creature! An hundred has he called so no doubt. He puts her upon singing. He praises her wild note—O my dear, the girl's undone!—must be undone!—The man, you know, is LOVELACE.

Let 'em bring Wyerley to you, if they will have you married—any body but Solmes and Lovelace be yours!—So advises

Your
ANNA HOWE.

My dearest friend, consider this alehouse as his garrison: him as an enemy: his brother-rakes as his assistants and abettors. Would not your brother, would not your uncles, tremble, if they knew how near them he is, as they pass to and fro?—I am told, he is resolved you shall not be carried to your uncle Antony's.—What can you do, *with* or *without* such an enterprizing—
Fill up the blank I leave.—I cannot find a word bad enough

LETTER XXVII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday, Three o'clock.

You incense, alarm, and terrify me, at the same time. —Hasten, my dearest friend, hasten to me what further intelligence you can gather about this vilest of men.

But never talk of innocence, of simplicity, and this unhappy girl, together! Must she not know, that such a man as that, dignified in his very aspect; and no disguise able to conceal his being of condition; must mean too much, when he places her at the upper end of his table, and calls her by such tender names? Would a girl, modest as simple, above seventeen, be set a-singing at the pleasure of such a man as that? a stranger, and professedly in disguise!—Would her father and grandmother, if honest people, and careful of their simple girl, permit such freedoms?

Keep his friend at distance from her!—To be sure his *designs* are villanous, if they have not been already effected.

Warn, my dear, if not too late, the unthinking father, of his child's danger. There cannot be a father in the world, who would sell his child's virtue. No mother! —The poor thing!

I long to hear the result of your intelligence. You shall *see* the simple creature, you tell me.—Let me know what sort of a girl she is.—A *sweet pretty girl!* you say. A *sweet* pretty *girl*, my dear!—They are sweet pretty words from your pen. But are they *yours* or *his* of her?—If she be so simple, if she have ease and nature in her manner, in her speech, and warbles prettily her *wild notes*, why, such a girl as that must engage such a profligate wretch, (as now indeed I

doubt this man is,) accustomed, perhaps, to town women, and their confident ways.—Must *deeply* and for a *long season* engage him: since perhaps when her innocence is departed, she will endeavour by art to supply the loss of the natural charms which now engage him.

Fine hopes of such a wretch's reformation! I would not, my dear, for the world, have any thing to say—but I need not make resolutions. I have not opened, nor will I open, his letter.—A sycophant creature!—With his hoarsenesses—got perhaps by a midnight revel, singing to his wild-note singer, and only increased in the coppice!

To be already on a footing!—In *his* esteem, I mean: for myself, I despise him. I hate myself almost for writing so much about *him*, and of such a simpleton as *this sweet pretty girl* as you call her: but no one can be either *sweet* or *pretty*, that is not modest, that is not virtuous.

And now, my dear, I will tell you how I came to put you upon this inquiry.

This vile *Joseph Leman* had given a hint to *Betty*, and she to *me*, as if Lovelace would be found out to be a very bad man, at a place where he had been lately seen in disguise. But he would see further, he said, before he told her more; and she promised *secrecy*, in hope to get at *further intelligence*. I thought it could be no harm, to get you to inform yourself, and me, of what could be gathered.* And now I see, his enemies

* It will be seen in Vol. I. Letter XXXIV. that Mr. Lovelace's motive for sparing his Rosebud was twofold. First, Because his pride was gratified by the grandmother's desiring him to spare her grand-daughter. *Many a pretty rogue*, says he, *had I spared, whom I did not spare, had my power been acknowledged, and my mercy in time implored. But the* debellare superbos *should be my motto, were I to have a new one.*

His other motive will be explained in the following pas-

are but too well warranted in their reports of him: and, if the ruin of this poor young creature be his aim, and if he had not known her but for his visits to Harlowe-place, I shall have reason to be doubly concerned for her; and doubly incensed against so vile a man.

I think I hate him worse than I do Solmes himself.

But I will not add one more word about him; after I have told you, that I wish to know, as soon as possible, what further occurs from your inquiry. I have a letter from him; but shall not open it till I do: and then, if it come out as I dare say it will, I will directly put the letter unopened into the place I took it from, and never trouble myself more about him. Adieu, my dearest friend.

CL. HARLOWE.

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sage, in the same. *I never was so honest, for so long together*, says he, *since my matriculation. It* behoves me *so to be.* Some way or other *my recess* [at this little inn] *may be found out, and it then will be thought that my Rosebud has attracted me. A report in my favour, from simplicities so amiable, may establish me, &c.*

Accordingly, as the reader will hereafter see, Mr. Lovelace finds by the *effects*, his expectations from the contrivance he set on foot by means of his agent Joseph Leman (who plays, as above, upon Betty Barnes) fully answered, though he could not know what passed on the occasion between the two ladies.

This explanation is the more necessary to be given, as several of our readers (through want of due attention) have attributed to Mr. Lovelace, on his behaviour to his Rosebud, a greater merit than was due to him; and moreover imagined, that it was improbable, that a man, who was capable of acting so generously (as they supposed) in *this* instance, should be guilty of any *atrocious* vileness. Not considering, that love, pride, and revenge as he owns in Vol. I. Letter XXXI. were ingredients of equal force in his composition; and that resistance was a *stimulus* to him.

LETTER XXVIII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Friday Noon, March 31.

JUSTICE obliges me to forward this after my last on the wings of the wind, as I may say. I really believe the man is innocent. Of this one accusation, I think he must be acquitted; and I am sorry I was so forward in dispatching away my intelligence by halves.

I have seen the girl. She is really a very pretty, a very neat, and, what is still a greater beauty, a very innocent young creature. He who could have ruined such an undesigned home-bred, must have been indeed infernally wicked. Her father is an honest simple man; entirely satisfied with his child, and with her new acquaintance.

I am almost afraid for your heart, when I tell you, that I find, now I have got to the bottom of this inquiry, something noble come out in this Lovelace's favour.

The girl is to be married next week; and this promoted and brought about by him. He is resolved, her rather says, to make one couple happy, and wishes he could make more so [*There's for you, my dear!*] And having taken a liking also to the young fellow whom she professes to love, he has given her an hundred pounds: the grandmother actually has it in her hands, to answer to the like sum given to the youth by one of his own relations: while Mr. Lovelace's companion, attracted by the example, has given twenty-five guineas to the father, who is poor, towards clothes to equip the pretty rustic.

Mr. Lovelace and his friend, the poor man says, when they first came to his house, affected to appear as *persons of low degree;* but now he knows the one (but

mentioned it in confidence) to be Colonel Barrow, the other Captain Sloane. The colonel he owns was at first very *sweet upon his girl:* but upon her grandmother's begging of him to spare her innocence, he vowed, that he never would offer any thing but good counsel to her. He kept his word; and the pretty fool acknowledged, that she never could have been better instructed by the minister himself from the *bible-book!*—The girl pleased me so well, that I made her visit to me worth her while.

But what, my dear, will become of us now?—Lovelace not only reformed, but turned preacher!—What will become of us now?—Why, my sweet friend, your *generosity* is now engaged in his favour!—Fie upon this *generosity!* I think in my heart, that it does as much mischief to the noble-minded, as *love* to the ignobler.—What before was only a *conditional liking*, I am now afraid will turn to *liking unconditional.*

I could not endure to change my invective into panegyric all at once, and so soon. We, or such as I at least, love to keep ourselves in countenance for a rash judgment, even when we know it to be rash. Everybody has not your generosity in confessing a mistake. It requires a greatness of soul frankly to do it. So I made still further inquiry after his life and manner, and behaviour there, in hopes to find something bad: but all uniform!

Upon the whole, Mr. Lovelace comes out with so much advantage from this inquiry, that were there the least room for it, I should suspect the whole to be *a plot set on foot to wash a blackamoor white.* Adieu, my dear.

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXIX

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Saturday, April 1.

HASTY censures do indeed subject themselves to the charge of variableness and inconsistency in judgment: and so they ought; for, if you, even you, my dear, were so loth to own a mistake, as in the instance before us you pretend you were, I believe I should not have loved you so well as I really do love you. Nor could you, in that case, have so frankly thrown the reflection I hint at upon yourself, had not your mind been one of the most ingenuous that ever woman boasted.

Mr. Lovelace has faults enow to deserve very severe censure, although he be not guilty of this. If I were upon such terms with him as he could wish me to be, I should give him a hint, that this treacherous Joseph Leman cannot be *so much* attached to him, as perhaps he thinks him to be. If it were, he would not have been so ready to report to his disadvantage (and to Betty Barnes too) this slight affair of the pretty rustic. Joseph has engaged Betty to secrecy; promising to let her, and her young master, to know more, when he knows the whole of the matter: and this hinders her from mentioning it, as she is nevertheless agog to do, to my sister or brother. And then she does not choose to disoblige Joseph; for although she pretends to look above him, she listens, I believe, to some love-stories he tells her.

Women having it not in their power to *begin* a courtship, some of them very frequently, I believe, lend an *ear* where their *hearts* incline not.

But to say no more of these low people, neither of whom I think tolerably of; I must needs own, that as

I should for ever have despised this man, had he been capable of such a vile intrigue in his way to Harlowe-place, and as I believe he *was* capable of it, it has indeed [I own it has] proportionably engaged my *generosity*, as you call it, in his favour: perhaps *more than I may have reason to wish it had.* And, rally me as you will, pray tell me fairly, my dear, would it not have had such an effect upon you?

Then the *real* generosity of the act.—I protest, my beloved friend, if he would be good for the rest of his life from this time, I would forgive him a great many of his past errors, were it only for the demonstration he has given in this, that he is *capable* of so good and bountiful a manner of thinking.

You may believe I made no scruple to open his letter, after the receipt of your second on this subject: nor shall I of answering it, as I have no reason to find fault with it: an article in his favour, procured him, however, so much the easier, (I must own,) by way of amends for the undue displeasure I took against him; though he knows it not.

It is lucky enough that this matter was cleared up to me by your friendly diligence so soon: for had I written before it was, it would have been to reinforce my dismission of him; and perhaps I should have mentioned the very motive; for it affected me more than I think it ought: and then, what an advantage would that have given him, when he could have cleared up the matter so happily for himself!

When I send you this letter of his, you will see how very humble he is: what *acknowledgments* of *natural* impatience: what confession of faults, as you prognosticated.

A very different appearance, I must own, all these make, now the story of the pretty rustic is cleared up, to what they would have made, had it not.

You will see how he accounts to me, 'That he could not, by reason of indisposition, come for my letter in person: and the forward creature labours the point, as if he thought I should be uneasy that he did not.' I am indeed sorry he should be ill on my account; and I will allow, that the suspense he has been in for some time past, must have been vexatious enough to so impatient a spirit. But all is owing originally to himself.

You will find him (in the presumption of being forgiven) 'full of contrivances and expedients for my escaping my threatened compulsion.'

I have always said, that next to being without fault, is the acknowledgment of a fault; since no amendment can be expected where an error is defended: but you will see in this very letter, an haughtiness even in his submissions. 'Tis true, I know not where to find fault as to the expression; yet cannot I be satisfied, that his humility *is* humility; or even an humility upon such conviction as one should be pleased with.

To be sure, he is far from being a polite man: yet is not directly and characteristically, as I may say, *unpolite*. But *his* is such a sort of politeness, as has, by a carelessness founded on very early indulgence, and perhaps on too much success in riper years, and an arrogance built upon both, grown into assuredness, and, of course, I may say, into indelicacy.

The distance you recommend at which to keep these men, is certainly right in the main: familiarity destroys reverence: But with whom?—Not with those, surely, who are prudent, grateful, and generous.

But it is very difficult for persons, who would avoid running into one extreme, to keep clear of another. Hence Mr. Lovelace, perhaps, thinks it the mark of a great spirit to humour his pride, though at the expense of his politeness: but can the man be a deep man, who

knows not how to make such distinctions as a person of but moderate parts cannot miss?

He complains heavily of my 'readiness to take mortal offence at him, and to dismiss him for ever: it is a *high* conduct, he says, he must be frank enough to tell me; a conduct that must be very far from contributing to allay his apprehensions of the possibility that I may be prosecuted into my relations' measures in behalf of Mr. Solmes.'

You will see how he puts his present and his future happiness, 'with regard to both worlds, entirely upon me.' The ardour with which he vows and promises, I think the heart only can dictate: how else can one guess at a man's heart?

You will also see, 'that he has already heard of the interview I am to have with Mr. Solmes;' and with what vehemence and anguish he expresses himself on the occasion. I intend to take proper notice of the ignoble means he stoops to, to come at his early intelligence out of our family. If persons pretending to principle, bear not their testimony against unprincipled actions, what check can they have?

You will see, 'how passionately he presses me to oblige him with a few lines, before the interview between Mr. Solmes and me takes place, (if, as he says, it *must* take place,) to confirm his hope, that I have no view, in my present displeasure against *him*, to give encouragement to *Solmes*. An apprehension, he says, that he must be excused for repeating; especially as the interview is a favour granted to that man, which I have refused to him; since, as he infers, were it not with such an expectation, why should my *friends* press it?'

I have written; and to this effect: 'That I had never intended to write another line to a man, who

could take upon himself to reflect upon my sex and myself, for having thought fit to make use of my own judgment.

'I tell him, that I have submitted to this interview with Mr. Solmes, purely as an act of duty, to shew my friends, that I will comply with their commands as far as I can; and that I hope, when Mr. Solmes himself shall see how determined I am, he will cease to prosecute a suit, in which it is impossible he should succeed with my consent.

'I assure him, that my aversion to Mr. Solmes is too sincere to permit me to doubt myself on this occasion. But, nevertheless, he must not imagine, that my rejecting of Mr. Solmes is in favour to him. That I value my freedom and independency too much, if my friends will but leave me to my own judgment, to give them up to a man so uncontroulable, and who shews me beforehand what I have to expect from him, were I in his power.

'I express my high disapprobation of the methods he takes to come at what passes in a private family. The pretence of corrupting other people's servants, by way of reprisal for the spies they have set upon him, I tell him, is a very poor excuse; and no more than an attempt to justify one meanness by another.

'There is, I observe to him, a *right* and a *wrong* in every thing, let people put what glosses they please upon their actions. To condemn a deviation, and to follow it by as great a one, what, I ask him, is this, but propagating a general corruption?—A stand must be made by somebody, turn round the evil as many as may, or virtue will be lost: *And shall it not be I*, a worthy mind would ask, that shall make this stand?

'I leave him to judge, whether *his* be a worthy one, tried by this rule: And whether, knowing the impetuosity of his own disposition, and the improbability there

is that my father and family will ever be reconciled to him, I ought to encourage his hopes?

'These spots and blemishes, I further tell him, give me not earnestness enough for any sake but *his own*, to wish him in a juster and nobler train of thinking and acting; for that I truly despised many of the ways he allows himself in: our minds are therefore infinitely different: and as to his professions of reformation, I must tell him, that profuse acknowledgments, without amendment, are but to me as so many anticipating concessions, which he may find much easier to make, than either to defend himself, or amend his errors.

'I inform him, that I have been lately made acquainted' [and so I have by Betty, and she by my brother] 'with the weak and wanton airs he gives himself of declaiming against matrimony. I severely reprehend him on this occasion: and ask him, with what view he can take so witless, so despicable a liberty, in which only the most abandoned of men allow themselves, and yet presume to address *me?*

'I tell him, that if I am obliged to go to my uncle Antony's, it is not to be inferred, that I must therefore *necessarily* be Mr. Solmes's wife: since I may not be so sure perhaps that the same exceptions lie so strongly against my quitting a house to which I shall be forcibly carried, as if I left my father's house: and, at the worst, I may be able to keep them in suspense till my cousin Morden comes, who will have a right to put me in possession of my grandfather's estate, if I insist upon it.'

This, I doubt, is somewhat of an artifice; which can only be excusable, as it is principally designed to keep him out of mischief. For I have but little hope, if carried thither, whether sensible or senseless, absolutely if I am left to the mercy of my brother and sister, but they will endeavour to force the solemn obligation upon

me. Otherwise, were there but any prospect of avoiding this, by delaying (or even by taking things to make me ill, if nothing else would do,) till my cousin comes, I hope I should not think of leaving even my uncle's house. For I should not know how to square it to my own principles, to dispense with the duty I owe to my father, wherever it shall be his will to place me.

But while you give me the charming hope, that, in order to avoid one man, I shall not be under the necessity of throwing myself upon the friends of the other; I think my case not desperate.

I see not any of my family, nor hear from them in any way of kindness. This looks as if they themselves expected no great matters from that Tuesday's conference which makes my heart flutter every time I think of it.

My uncle Antony's presence on the occasion I do not much like: but I had rather meet him than my brother or sister: yet my uncle is very impetuous. I can't think Mr. Lovelace can be much more so; at least he cannot *look* angry, as my uncle, with his harder features, can. These sea-prospered gentlemen, as my uncle has often made me think, not used to any but elemental controul, and even ready to buffet that, bluster often as violently as the winds they are accustomed to be angry at.

I believe Mr. Solmes will look as much like a fool as I shall do, if it be true, as my uncle Harlowe writes, and as Betty often tells me, that he is as much afraid of seeing me, as I am of seeing him.

Adieu, my happy, thrice-happy Miss Howe, who have no hard terms affixed to your duty!—Who have nothing to do, but to fall in with a choice your mother has made for you, to which you have not, nor can

have, a just objection: except the frowardness of our sex, as our free censurers would perhaps take the liberty to say, makes it one, that the choice was your mother's, at first hand. Perverse nature, we know, loves not to be prescribed to; although youth is not so well qualified, either by sedateness or experience, to choose for itself.

To *know* your own happiness, and that it is *now*, nor to leave it to *after-reflection* to look back upon the *preferable past* with a heavy and self-accusing heart, that you did not choose it when you might have chosen it, is all that is necessary to complete your felicity!—And this power is wished you by

Your
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXX

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Saturday, April 2.

I OUGHT yesterday to have acknowledged the receipt of your parcel. Robin tells me, that the Joseph Leman, whom you mention as the traitor, saw him. He was in the poultry-yard, and spoke to Robin over the bank which divides that from the green-lane. 'What brings you hither, Mr. Robert? —But I can tell. Hie away, as fast as you can.'

No doubt but their dependence upon this fellow's vigilance, and upon Betty's, leaves you more at liberty in your airings, than you would otherwise be. But you are the only person I ever heard of, who in such circumstances had not some faithful servant to trust little offices to. A poet, my dear, would not have gone to work for an Anglica, without giving her her

Violetta, her Cleanthe, her Clelia, or some such pretty-named confidant—an old nurse at the least.

I read to my mother several passages of your letters. But your last paragraph, in your yesterday's, quite charmed her. You have won her heart by it, she told me. And while her fit of gratitude for it lasted, I was thinking to make my proposal, and to press it with all the earnestness I could give it, when Hickman came in, making his legs, and stroking his cravat and ruffles.

I could most freely have *ruffled* him for it. As it was—Sir, said I, saw you not some of the servants?—Could not one of them have come in before you?

He begged pardon: looked as if he knew not whether he had best keep his ground, or withdraw: —Till my mother, his fast friend, interposed—Why, Nancy, we are not upon particulars.—Pray, Mr. Hickman, sit down.

By your le—ave, good Madam, to me. You know his drawl, when his muscles give him the respectful hesitation.—

Ay, ay, pray sit down, honest man, if you are weary—but by *mamma*, if you please. I desire my hoop may have its full circumference. All they're good for, that I know, is to clean dirty shoes, and to keep fellows at a distance.

Strange girl! cried my mother, displeased; but with a milder turn, ay, ay, Mr. Hickman, sit down by *me:* I have no such *forbidding* folly in my dress.

I looked serious; and in my heart was glad this speech of hers was not made to your uncle Antony.

My mother, with the true widow's freedom, would mighty prudently have led into the subject we had been upon; and would have had read to him, I question not, that very paragraph in your letter which is so much in his favour. He was highly obliged to dear Miss Harlowe, she would assure him; that she *did* say—

But I asked him, if he had any news by his last letters from London?—A question which he always understands to be a *subject changer;* for otherwise I never put it. And so if he be *but* silent, I am not angry with him that he answers it not.

I choose not to mention my proposal before him, till I know how it will be relished by my mother. If it be not well received, perhaps I may employ *him* on the occasion. Yet I don't like to owe him an obligation, if I could help it. For men who have his views in their heads, do so parade it, so strut about, if a woman condescend to employ them in her affairs, that one has no patience with them.

However, if I *find* not an opportunity this day, I will make one to-morrow.

I shall not open either of your sealed-up parcels, but in *your* presence. There is no need. Your conduct is out of all question with me: and by the extracts you have given me from his letters and your own, I know all that relates to the present situation of things between you.

I was going to give you a little flippant hint or two. But since you wish to be thought superior to all our sex in the command of yourself; and since indeed you deserve to be thought so; I will spare you. You are, however, at times, more than half inclined to speak out. That you do not, is only owing to a little bashful struggle between you and *yourself*, as I may say. When that is quite got over, I know you will favour me undisguisedly with the result.

I cannot forgive your taking upon you (at so extravagant a rate too) to pay my mother's servants. Indeed I *am*, and I *will be*, angry with you for it. A year's wages at once well nigh! only as, unknown to my mother, I make it better for the servants according to their merits—how it made the man stare!—And it

may be his ruin too, as far as I know. If he should buy a ring, and marry a sorry body in the neighbourhood with the money, one would be loth, a twelvemonth hence, that the poor old fellow should think he had reason to wish the bounty never conferred.

I MUST *give you your way in these things*, you say.—And I know there is no contradicting you: for you were ever putting too great a value upon little offices done for *you*, and too little upon the great ones you do for *others*. The satisfaction you have in doing so, I grant it, repays you. But why should you, by the nobleness of your mind, throw reproaches upon the rest of the world? particularly, upon your own family —and upon ours too?

If, as I have heard you say, it is a good rule to *give* WORDS *the hearing, but to form our judgment of men and things* by DEEDS ONLY; what shall we think of one, who seeks to find palliatives in *words*, for narrowness of heart in the very persons her *deeds* so silently, yet so forcibly, reflect upon? Why blush you not, my dear friend, to be thus singular?—When you meet with another person whose mind is like your own, then display your excellencies as you please: but till then, for pity's sake, let your heart and your spirit suffer a little contradiction.

I intended to write but a few lines; chiefly to let you know your parcels are come safe. And accordingly I began in a large hand; and I am already come to the end of my second sheet. But I could write a quire without hesitation upon a subject so copious and so beloved as is your praise. Not for *this* single instance of your generosity; since I am really angry with you for it; but for the benevolence exemplified in the whole tenor of your life and actions; of which this is but a common instance. Heaven direct you, in

your own arduous trials, is all I have room to add; and make you as happy, as you think to be

Your own

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXXI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Sunday Night, April 2.

I HAVE many new particulars to acquaint you with, that shew a great change in the behaviour of my friends to me. I did not think we had so much art among us as I find we have. I will give these particulars to you as they offered.

All the family was at church in the morning. They brought good Dr. Lewen with them, in pursuance of a previous invitation. And the doctor sent up to desire my permission to attend me in my own apartment.

You may believe it was easily granted.

So the doctor came up.

We had a conversation of near an hour before dinner: but, to my surprise, he waved every thing that would have led to the subject I supposed he wanted to talk about. At last, I asked him, if it were not thought strange I should be so long absent from church? He made me some handsome compliments upon it: but said, for his part, he had ever made it a rule to avoid interfering in the private concerns of families, unless desired to do so.

I was prodigiously disappointed; but supposing that he was thought too just a man to be made a judge of in this cause; I led no more to it: nor, when he was called down to dinner, did he take the least notice of leaving me behind him there.

But this was not the first time since my confinement that I thought it a hardship not to dine below. And when I parted with him on the stairs, a tear would burst its way; and he hurried down; his own good-natured eyes glistening; for he saw it.—Nor trusted he his voice, lest the accent I suppose should have discovered his concern; departing in silence; though with his usual graceful obligingness.

I hear that he praised me, and my part in the conversation that passed between us. To shew them, I suppose, that it was not upon the interesting subjects which I make no doubt he was desired not to enter upon.

He left me so dissatisfied, yet so perplexed with this new way of treatment, that I never found myself so much disconcerted, and out of my train.

But I was to be more so. This was to be a day of puzzle to me. *Pregnant* puzzle, if I may so say: for there must great meaning lie behind it.

In the afternoon, all but my brother and sister went to church with the good doctor; who left his compliments for me. I took a walk in the garden. My brother and sister walked in it too, and kept me in their eye a good while, on purpose, as I thought, that I might see how gay and good-humoured they were together. At last they came down the walk that I was coming up, hand-in-hand, lover-like.

Your servant, Miss—your servant, Sir—passed between my brother and me.

Is it not cold-ish, sister Clary! in a kinder voice than usual, said my sister, and stopped.—I stopped and courtesied low to her half-courtesy.—I think not, Sister, said I.

She went on. I courtesied without return; and proceeded, turning to my poultry-yard.

By a shorter turn, arm-in-arm, they were there before me.

I think, Clary, said my brother, you must present me with some of this breed, for Scotland.

If you please, Brother.

I'll choose for you, said my sister.

And while I fed them, they pointed to half a dozen: yet intending nothing by it, I believe, but to shew a deal of love and good-humour to each other before me.

My uncles next, (at their return from church) were to do me the honour of *their* notice. They bid Betty tell me, they would drink tea with me in my own apartment. Now, thought I, shall I have the subject of next Tuesday enforced upon me.

But they contradicted the order for tea, and only my uncle Harlowe came up to me.

Half-distant, half-affectionate, at his entering my chamber, was the air he put on to his *daughter-niece*, as he used to call me; and I threw myself at his feet, and besought his favour.

None of these discomposures, Child. None of these apprehensions. You will now have every body's favour. All is coming about, my dear. I was impatient to see you. I could no longer deny myself this satisfaction. He then raised me, and kissed me, and called me charming creature!

But he waved entering into any interesting subject. All will be well now. All will be right!—No more complainings! every body loves you!—I only came to make my earliest court to you! [were his condescending words] and to sit and talk of twenty and twenty fond things, as I used to do. And let every past disagreeable thing be forgotten; as if nothing had happened.

He understood me as beginning to hint at the disgrace of my confinement—No disgrace my dear can fall to your lot: your reputation is too well established.

—I longed to see you, repeated he—I have seen nobody half so amiable since I saw you last.

And again he kissed my cheek, my glowing cheek; for I was impatient, I was vexed, to be thus, as I thought, played upon: And how could I be thankful for a visit, that (it now was evident) was only a too *humble* artifice, to draw me in against the next Tuesday, or to leave me inexcusable to them all?

O my cunning brother!—This is *his* contrivance. And then my anger made me recollect the triumph in his and my sister's fondness for each other, as practised before me; and the mingled indignation flashing from their eyes, as arm-in-arm they spoke to me, and the forced condescension playing upon their lips, when they called me Clary, and Sister.

Do you think I could, with these reflections, look upon my uncle Harlowe's visit as the favour he seemed desirous I should think it to be?—Indeed I could not; and seeing him so studiously avoid all recrimination, as I may call it, I gave into the affectation; and followed him in his talk of indifferent things: while he seemed to admire this thing and that, as if he had never seen them before; and now-and-then condescendingly kissed the hand that wrought some of the things he fixed his eyes upon; not so much to admire them, as to find subjects to divert what was most in *his* head, and in *my* heart.

At his going away—How can I leave you here by yourself, my dear? you, whose company used to enliven us all. You are not expected down indeed: but I protest I had a good mind to surprise your father and mother!—If I thought nothing would arise that would be disagreeable—My dear! my love! [O the dear artful gentleman! how could my uncle Harlowe so dissemble?] What say you? Will you give me your hand? Will you see your father? Can you stand his

displeasure, on first seeing the dear creature who has given him and all of us so much disturbance? Can you promise future—

He saw me rising in my temper—Nay, my dear, interrupting himself, if you cannot be all resignation, I would not have you think of it.

My heart, struggling between duty and warmth of temper, was full. You know, my dear, I never could bear to be dealt meanly with!—How—how *can* you, Sir! you my Papa-uncle—How *can* you, Sir!—The poor girl!—for I could not speak with connexion.

Nay, my dear, if you cannot be all duty, all resignation—better stay where you are.—But after the instance you have given—

Instance I have given!—What instance, Sir?

Well, well, Child, better stay where you are, if your past confinement hangs so heavy upon you—but now there will be a sudden end to it—Adieu, my dear!—Three words only—Let your compliance be sincere!—and love me, as you used to love me—your Grandfather did not do so much for you, as I will do for you.

Without suffering me to reply, he hurried away, as I thought, like one who had been employed to act a part against his will, and was glad it was over.

Don't you see, my dear Miss Howe, how they are all determined?—Have I not reason to dread next Tuesday?

Up presently after came my sister:—to observe, I suppose, the way I was in.

She found me in tears.

Have you not a Thomas à Kempis, Sister? with a stiff air.

I have, Madam.

Madam!—How long are we to be at this distance, Clary?

No longer, my dear Bella, if you allow me to call you sister. And I took her hand.

No fawning neither, Girl!

I withdrew my hand as hastily, as you may believe I should have done, had I, in feeling for one of your parcels under the wood, been bitten by a viper.

I beg pardon, said I,—Too-too ready to make advances, I am always subjecting myself to contempts.

People who know not how to keep a middle behaviour, said she, must ever do so.

I will fetch you the Kempis, Sister. I did. Here it is. You will find excellent things, Bella, in that little book.

I wish, retorted she, you had profited by them.

I wish *you* may, said I. *Example* from a sister older than one's self is a fine thing.

Older! saucy little fool!—And away she flung.

What a captious old woman will my sister make, if she lives to be one!—demanding the reverence, perhaps, yet not aiming at the merit; and ashamed of the years that can only entitle her to the reverence.

It is plain, from what I have *related*, that they think they have got me at some advantage by obtaining my consent to this interview: but if it were *not*, Betty's impertinence just now would make it evident. She has been complimenting me upon it; and upon the visit of my uncle Harlowe. She says, the difficulty now is more than half over with me. She is sure I would not see Mr. Solmes, but to have him. Now shall she be soon better employed than of late she has been. All hands will be at work. She loves dearly to have weddings go forward!—Who knows, whose turn will be next?

I found in the afternoon a reply to my answer to Mr

Lovelace's letter. It is full of promises, full of vows of gratitude, of *eternal* gratitude, is his word, among others still more hyperbolic. Yet Mr. Lovelace, the *least* of any man whose letters I have seen, runs into those elevated absurdities. I should be apt to despise him for it, if he did. Such language looks always to me, as if the flatterer thought to *find* a woman a fool, or hoped to *make* her one.

'He regrets my indifference to him; which puts all the hope he has in my favour upon the shocking usage I receive from my friends.

'As to my charge upon him of unpoliteness and uncontroulableness—What [he asks] can he say? since being unable absolutely to vindicate himself, he has too much ingenuousness to attempt to do so: yet is struck dumb by my harsh construction, that his acknowledging temper is owing more to his carelessness to defend himself, than to his inclination to amend. He had never *before* met with the objections against his morals which I had raised, *justly* raised: and he was resolved to obviate them. What is it, he asks, that he has promised, but reformation by my example? And what occasion for the promise, if he had not faults, and those very great ones, to reform? He hopes acknowledgment of an error is no bad sign; although my severe virtue has interpreted it into one.

'He believes I may be right (*severely* right, he calls it) in my judgment against making reprisals in the case of the intelligence he receives from my family: he cannot charge himself to be of a temper that leads him to be inquisitive into any body's private affairs; but hopes, that the circumstances of the case, and the strange conduct of my friends, will excuse him; especially when so much depends upon his knowing the movements of a family so violently bent, by measures right or wrong, to carry their point against me, in malice to him. People,

he says, who act like angels, ought to have angels to deal with. For his part, he has not yet learned the difficult lesson of returning *good for evil:* and shall think himself the less encouraged to learn it by the treatment I have met with from the very persons who would trample upon him, as they do upon me, were he to lay himself under their feet.

'He excuses himself for the liberties he owns he has heretofore taken in ridiculing the marriage-state. It is a subject, he says, that he has not of late treated so lightly. He owns it to be so trite, so beaten a topic with all libertines and witlings; so frothy, so empty, so nothing-meaning, so worn-out a theme, that he is heartily ashamed of himself, ever to have made it *his*. He condemns it as a stupid reflection upon the laws and good order of society, and upon a man's own ancestors: and in himself, who has some reason to value himself upon his descent and alliances, more censurable, than in those who have not the same advantages to boast of. He promises to be more circumspect than ever, both in his words and actions, that he may be more and more worthy of my approbation; and that he may give an assurance before hand, that a foundation is laid in his mind for my example to work upon with equal reputation and effect to us both;—if he may be so happy to call me his.

'He gives me up, as absolutely lost, if I go to my uncle Antony's; the close confinement; the moated house; the chapel; the implacableness of my brother and sister; and their power over the rest of the family, he sets forth in strong lights; and plainly says, that he must have a struggle to prevent my being carried thither.'

Your kind, your generous endeavours to interest your mother in my behalf, will, I hope, prevent those harsher extremities to which I might be otherwise driven. And

to you I will fly, if permitted, and keep all my promises, of not corresponding with any body, not seeing any body, but by your mother's direction and yours.

I will close and deposit at this place. It is not necessary to say, how much I am

Your ever affectionate and obliged

Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XXXII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

I am glad my papers are safe in your hands. I will make it my endeavour to deserve your good opinion, that I may not at once disgrace your judgment, and my own heart.

I have another letter from Mr. Lovelace. He is extremely apprehensive of the meeting I am to have with Mr. Solmes to-morrow. He says, 'that the airs that wretch gives himself on the occasion add to his concern; and it is with infinite difficulty that he prevails upon himself not to make him a visit to let him know what he may expect, if compulsion be used towards me in his favour. He assures me, that Solmes has actually talked with tradesmen of new equipages, and names the people in town with whom he has treated: that he has even' [Was there ever such a horrid wretch!] 'allotted this and that apartment in his house, for a nursery, and other offices.'

How shall I bear to hear such a creature talk of love to me? I shall be out of all patience with him. Besides, I thought that he did not dare to make or talk of these impudent preparations.—So inconsistent as such are with my brother's views—but I fly the subject.

Upon this confidence of Solmes, you will less wonder

at that of Lovelace, 'in pressing me in the name of all his family, to escape from so determined a violence as is intended to be offered to me at my uncle's: that the forward contriver should propose Lord M.'s chariot and six to be at the stile that leads up to the lonely coppice adjoining to our paddock. You will see how audaciously he mentions settlements ready drawn; horsemen ready to mount; and one of his cousins Montague to be in the chariot, or at the George in the neighbouring village, waiting to accompany me to Lord M.'s, or to Lady Betty's or Lady Sarah's, or to town, as I please; and upon such orders, or conditions, and under such restrictions, as to himself, as I shall prescribe.'

You will see how he threatens, 'To watch and waylay them, and to *rescue* me as he calls it, by an armed force of friends and servants, if they attempt to carry me against my will to my uncle's; and this, whether I give my consent to the enterprise, or not:—since he shall have no hopes if I am once there.'

O my dear friend! Who can think of these things, and not be extremely miserable in her apprehensions!

This mischievous sex! What had I to do with any of them; or they with me?—I had deserved this, were it by my own seeking, by my own giddiness, that I had brought myself into this situation—I wish with all my heart—but how foolish we are apt to wish when we find ourselves unhappy, and know not how to help ourselves!

On your mother's goodness, however, is my reliance. If I can but avoid being precipitated on either hand, till my cousin Morden arrives, a reconciliation must follow; and all will be happy.

I have deposited a letter for Mr. Lovelace; in which 'I charge him, as he would not disoblige me for ever, to avoid any rash step, any visit to Mr. Solmes, which may be followed by acts of violence.'

I re-assure him, 'That I will sooner die than be that man's wife.

'Whatever be my usage, whatever shall be the result of the apprehended interview, I insist upon it that he presume not to offer violence to any of my friends: and express myself highly displeased, that he should presume upon such an interest in my esteem, as to think himself entitled to dispute my father's authority in my removal to my uncle's; although I tell him, that I will omit neither prayers nor contrivance, even to the making myself ill, to avoid going.'

To-morrow is Tuesday! How soon comes upon us the day we dread!—Oh that a deep sleep of twenty-four hours would seize my faculties!—But then the next day would be Tuesday, as to all the effects and purposes for which I so much dread it. If this reach you before the event of the so much apprehended interview can be known, pray for

Your
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Tuesday Morning, Six o'clock.

THE day is come!—I wish it were happily over. I have had a wretched night. Hardly a wink have I slept, ruminating upon the approaching interview. The very distance of time to which they consented, has added solemnity to the meeting, which otherwise it would not have had.

A thoughtful mind is not a blessing to be coveted, unless it had such a happy vivacity with it as yours: a vivacity, which enables a person to enjoy the *present*, without being over-anxious about the *future*.

Tuesday, Eleven o'clock.

I have had a visit from my aunt Hervey. Betty, in her alarming way, told me, I should have a lady to breakfast with me, whom I little expected; giving me to believe it was my mother. This fluttered me so much, on hearing a lady coming up-stairs, supposing it was she, (and not knowing how to account for her motives in such a visit, after I had been so long banished from her presence,) that my aunt, at her entrance, took notice of my disorder; and, after her first salutation,

Why, Miss, said she, you seem surprised.—Upon my word, you thoughtful young ladies have strange apprehensions about nothing at all. What, taking my hand, can be the matter with you?—Why, my dear, tremble, tremble, tremble at this rate? You'll not be fit to be seen by any body. Come, my love, kissing my cheek, pluck up a courage. By this needless flutter on the approaching interview, when it is over you will judge of your other antipathies, and laugh at yourself for giving way to so apprehensive an imagination.

I said, that whatever we strongly imagined, was in its effects at the time *more* than imaginary, although to others it might not appear so: that I had not rested one hour all night: that the impertinent set over me, by giving me room to think my mother was coming up, had so much disconcerted me, that I should be very little qualified to see any body I disliked to see.

There was no accounting for these things, she said. Mr. Solmes last night supposed he should be under as much agitation as I could be.

Who is it, then, Madam, that so reluctant an interview on *both* sides, is to please?

Both of you, my dear, I hope, after the first flurries are over. The most apprehensive beginnings, I have often known, make the happiest conclusions.

There can be but one happy conclusion to the intended visit; and that is, That both sides may be satisfied it will be the last.

She then represented how unhappy it would be for me, if I did not suffer myself to be prevailed upon: she pressed me to receive Mr. Solmes as became my education: and declared, that his apprehensions on the expectation he had of seeing me, were owing to his love and his awe; intimating, That true love is ever accompanied by fear and reverence; and that no blustering, braving lover could deserve encouragement.

To this I answered, That constitution was to be considered: that a man of spirit would act like one, and could do nothing meanly: that a creeping mind would creep in every thing, where it had a view to obtain a benefit by it; and insult, where it had power, and nothing to expect: that this was not a point now to be determined with me: that I had said as much as I could possibly say on this subject: that this interview was imposed upon me: by those, indeed, who had a right to impose it: but that it was sorely against my will complied with: and for this reason, that there was *aversion*, not *wilfulness*, in the case; and so nothing could come of it, but a pretence, as I much apprehended, to use me still more severely than I had been used.

She was then pleased to charge me with prepossession and prejudice. She expatiated upon the duty of a child. She imputed to me abundance of fine qualities; but told me, that, in this case, *that* of persuadableness was wanting to crown all. She insisted upon the *merit* of obedience, although my will were *not* in it. From a little hint I gave of my still greater dislike to see Mr. Solmes, on account of the freedom I had treated him with, she talked to me of his forgiving disposition; of his infinite respect for me; and I cannot tell what of this sort.

I never found myself so fretful in my life: and so I told my aunt; and begged her pardon for it. But she said, it was well disguised then; for she saw nothing but little tremors, which were usual with young ladies when they were to see their admirers for the *first* time; and this might be called so, with respect to me; since it was the first time I had consented to see Mr. Solmes in that light—but that the *next*—

How, Madam, interrupted I—Is it then imagined, that I give this meeting on that footing?

To be sure it is, Child.

To be sure it is, Madam! Then I do yet desire to decline it.—I will not, I cannot, see him, if he expects me to see him upon those terms.

Niceness, punctilio, mere punctilio, Niece!—Can you think that your appointment, (day, place, hour,) and knowing what the intent of it was, is to be interpreted away as a mere ceremony, and to mean nothing? —Let me tell you, my dear, your father, mother, uncles, every body, respect this appointment as the first act of your compliance with their wills: and therefore recede not, I desire you; but make a merit of what cannot be avoided.

Oh the hideous wretch!—Pardon me, Madam.—*I* to be supposed to meet such a man as *that*, with such a view! and he to be armed with such an expectation! —But it cannot be that he expects it, whatever *others* may do.—It is plain he cannot, by the fears he tells you all he shall have to see me. If his *hope* were so audacious, he could not *fear* so much.

Indeed, he *has* this hope; and justly founded too. But his fear arises from his reverence, as I told you before.

His *reverence!*—his unworthiness!—'Tis so apparent, that even he himself sees it, as well as every body else. Hence his offers to purchase me! Hence it is,

that settlements are to make up for acknowledged want of merit!

His *unworthiness*, say you!—Not so fast, my dear. Does not this look like setting a high value upon yourself?—We all have exalted notions of your merit, Niece; but nevertheless, it would not be wrong, if you were to arrogate less to yourself; though more were to be your due than your friends attribute to you.

I am sorry, Madam, it should be thought arrogance in me, to suppose I am not worthy of a better man than Mr. Solmes, both as to person and mind: and as to fortune, I thank God I despise all that can be insisted upon in his favour from so poor a plea.

She told me, It signified nothing to talk: I knew the expectation of every one.

Indeed I did not. It was impossible I could think of such a strange expectation, upon a compliance made only to shew I would comply in all that was in my power to comply with.

I might easily, she said, have supposed, that every one thought I was beginning to oblige them all, by the kind behaviour of my brother and sister to me in the garden, last Sunday; by my sister's visit to me afterwards in my chamber (although *both more stiffly received by me*, than were either wished or expected); by my uncle Harlowe's affectionate visit to me the same afternoon, not indeed *so very gratefully received* as I used to receive his favours:—but this he kindly imputed to the displeasure I had conceived at my confinement, and to my intention to come off by degrees, that I might keep myself in countenance for my past opposition.

See, my dear, the low cunning of that Sunday-management, which then so much surprised me! And see the reason why Dr. Lewen was admitted to visit me, yet forbore to enter upon a subject about which I thought he came to talk to me!—For it seems there

was no occasion to dispute with me on the point I was to be *supposed* to have conceded to.—See, also, how unfairly my brother and sister must have represented their pretended kindness, when (though they had an end to answer by *appearing* kind) their antipathy to me seems to have been so strong, that they could not help insulting me by their arm-in-arm lover-like behaviour to each other; as my sister afterwards likewise did, when she came to borrow my Kempis.

I lifted up my hands and eyes! I cannot, said I, give *this* treatment a name! The *end* so unlikely to be answered by *means* so low! I know *whose* the whole is! He that could get my uncle Harlowe to contribute his part, and procure the acquiescence of the rest of my friends to it, must have the power to do any thing with them against me.

Again my aunt told me, that talking and invective, now I had given the expectation, would signify nothing. She hoped I would not shew every one, that they had been too forward in their constructions of my desire to oblige them. She could assure me, that it would be worse for me, if *now* I receded, than if I had never advanced.

Advanced, Madam! How can you say *advanced?* Why, this is a trick upon me! A poor low trick! Pardon me, Madam, I don't say you have a hand in it.—But, my dearest Aunt, tell me, Will not my mother be present at this dreaded interview? Will she not so far favour me? Were it but to qualify—

Qualify, my dear, interrupted she—your mother, and your uncle Harlowe would not be present on this occasion for the world—

O then, Madam, how can they look upon my consent to this interview as an *advance?*

My aunt was displeased at this home-push. Miss Clary, said she, there is no dealing with you. It

would be happy for you, and for every body else, were your obedience as ready as your wit. I will leave you—

Not in anger, I hope, Madam, interrupted I—all I meant was, to observe, that let the meeting issue as it may, and as it *must* issue, it cannot be a disappointment to *any body*.

O Miss! you seem to be a very determined young creature. Mr. Solmes will be here at your time: and remember once more, that upon the coming afternoon depend the peace of your whole family, and your own happiness.

And so saying, down she hurried.

Here I will stop. In what way I shall resume, or when, is not left to me to conjecture; much less determine. I am excessively uneasy!—No good news from your mother, I doubt!—I will deposit thus far, for fear of the worst.

Adieu, my best, rather, my *only* friend!

Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XXXIV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Tuesday Evening; and continued through the Night.

Well, my dear, I am alive, and here! but how long I shall be either here, or alive, I cannot say. I have a vast deal to write; and perhaps shall have little time for it. Nevertheless, I must tell you how the saucy Betty again discomposed me, when she came up with this Solmes's message; although, as you will remember from my last, I was in a way before that wanted no additional surprises.

Miss! Miss! Miss! cried she, as fast as she could

speak, with her arms spread abroad, and all her fingers distended, and held up, will you be pleased to walk down into your own parlour?—There is every body, I will assure you in full *congregation!*—And there is Mr. Solmes, as fine as a lord, with a charming white peruke, fine laced shirt and ruffles, coat trimmed with silver, and a waistcoat standing on end with lace!—Quite handsome, believe me!—You never saw such an alteration!—Ah! Miss, shaking her head, 'tis pity you have said so much against him! but you know how to come off for all that!—I hope it will not be too late!

Impertinence! said I—Wert thou bid to come up in this fluttering way?—and I took up my fan, and fanned myself.

Bless me! said she, how soon these fine young ladies will be put into *flusterations!*—I mean not either to offend or frighten you, I am sure.—

Every body there, do you say?—Who do you call every body?

Why, Miss, holding out her left palm opened, and with a flourish, and a saucy leer, patting it with the fore finger of the other, at every mentioned person, there is your papa!—there is your mamma!—there is your uncle Harlowe!—there is your uncle Antony!—your aunt Hervey!—*my* young lady!—and my young master!—and Mr. Solmes, with the air of a great courtier, standing up, because he named you:—Mrs. Betty, said he, [then the ape of a wench bowed and scraped, as awkwardly as I suppose the person did whom she endeavoured to imitate,] pray give my humble service to Miss, and tell her, I wait her commands.

Was not this a wicked wench?—I trembled so, I could hardly stand. I was spiteful enough to say, that her young mistress, I supposed, bid her put on these

airs, to frighten me out of a capacity of behaving so calmly as should procure me my uncles' compassion.

What a way do you put yourself in, Miss, said the insolent!—Come, dear Madam, taking up my fan, which I had laid down, and approaching me with it, fanning, shall I—

None of thy impertinence!—But say you, *all* my friends are below with him? And am I to *appear* before them *all?*

I can't tell if they'll stay when you come. I think they seemed to be moving when Mr. Solmes gave me his orders.—But what answer shall I carry to the 'squire?

Say, I can't go!—but yet when 'tis over, 'tis over!—Say, I'll wait upon—I'll attend—I'll come presently—say any thing; I care not what—but give me my fan, and fetch me a glass of water—

She went, and I fanned myself all the time; for I was in a flame; and hemmed, and struggled with myself all I could; and, when she returned, drank my water; and finding no hope presently of a quieter heart, I sent her down, and followed her with precipitation; trembling so, that, had I not hurried, I question if I could have got down at all.—Oh my dear, what a poor, passive machine is the body when the mind is disordered!

There are two doors to *my* parlour, as I used to call it. As I entered at one, my friends hurried out at the other. I just saw the gown of my sister, the last who slid away. My uncle Antony went out with them: but he staid not long, as you shall hear; and they all remained in the next parlour, a wainscot partition only parting the two. I remember them both in one: but they were separated in favour of us girls, for each to receive her visitors in at her pleasure.

Mr. Solmes approached me as soon as I entered, cringing to the ground, a visible confusion in every

feature of his face. After half a dozen choaked-up Madams,—he was very sorry—he was very much concerned—it was his misfortune—and there he stopped, being unable presently to complete a sentence.

This gave me a little more presence of mind. Cowardice in a foe begets courage in one's self—I see that plainly now—yet perhaps, at bottom, the new-made bravo is a greater coward than the other.

I turned from him, and seated myself in one of the fireside chairs, fanning myself. I have since recollected, that I must have looked very saucily. Could I have had any *thoughts* of the man, I should have despised myself for it. But what can be said in the case of an aversion so perfectly sincere?

He hemmed five or six times, as I had done above; and these produced a sentence—that I could not but see his confusion. This sentence produced two or three more. I believe my aunt had been his tutoress; for it was his awe, his reverence for so superlative a Lady [I assure you!] And he hoped—he hoped—three times he hoped, before he told me what—at last it came out, that I was too generous (generosity, he said, was my character) to despise him for such—for such—for such—*true* tokens of his love.

I do indeed see you under some confusion, Sir; and this gives me hope, that although I have been compelled, as I may call it, to give way to this interview, it may be attended with happier effects than I had apprehended from it.

He had hemmed himself into more courage.

You could not, Madam, imagine any creature so blind to your merits, and so little attracted by them, as easily to forego the interest and approbation he was honoured with by your worthy family, while he had any hope given him, that one day he might, by his perseverance and zeal, expect your favour.

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I am but too much aware, Sir, that it is upon the interest and approbation you mention, that you build such hope. It is impossible otherwise, that a man, who has any regard for his *own* happiness, would persevere against such declarations as I have made, and think myself obliged to make, in justice to you, as well as to myself.

He had seen many instances, he told me, and had heard of more, where ladies had seemed as averse, and yet had been induced, some by motives of compassion, others by persuasion of friends, to change their minds; and had been very happy afterwards: and he hoped this might be the case here.

I have no notion, Sir, of compliment, in an article of such importance as this: yet I am sorry to be obliged to speak my mind so plainly as I am going to do.—Know then, that I have invincible objections, Sir, to your address. I have avowed them with an earnestness that I believe is without example: and why?—because I believe it is without example that any young creature, circumstanced as I am, was ever treated as I have been treated on your account.

It is hoped, Madam, that your consent may in time be obtained—*that* is the hope; and I shall be a miserable man if it cannot.

Better, Sir, give me leave to say, you were miserable by yourself, than that you should make two so.

You may have heard, Madam, things to my disadvantage. No man is without enemies. Be pleased to let me know *what* you have heard, and I will either own my faults, and amend; or I will convince you that I am basely *bespattered:* and once I understand you overheard something that I should say, that gave you offence: unguardedly, perhaps; but nothing but what shewed my value, and that I would persist so long as I could have hope.

I have indeed heard many things to your disadvantage:—and I was far from being pleased with what I overheard fall from your lips: but as you were not any thing to me, and never could be, it was not for me to be concerned about the one or the other.

I am sorry, Madam, to hear this. I am sure you should not tell me of my fault, that I would be unwilling to correct in myself.

Then, Sir, correct *this* fault—do not wish to have a young creature compelled in the most material article of her life, for the sake of motives she despises; and in behalf of a person she cannot value: one that has, in her own right, sufficient to set her above all your offers, and a spirit that craves no more than what it *has*, to make itself easy and happy.

I don't see, Madam, how you would be happy, if I were to discontinue my address: for—

That is nothing to you, Sir, interrupted I: do you but withdraw your pretensions: and if it be thought fit to start up another man for my punishment, the blame will not lie at your door. You will be entitled to my thanks; and most heartily will I thank you.

He paused, and seemed a little at a loss: and I was going to give him still stronger and more personal instances of my plain-dealing; when in came my uncle Antony.

So, Niece, so!—sitting in state like a queen, giving audience! *haughty* audience!—Mr. Solmes, why stand you thus humbly?—Why this distance, man? I hope to see you upon a more intimate footing before we part.

I arose, as soon as he entered—and approached him with a bent knee: Let me, Sir, reverence my uncle, whom I have not for so long time seen!—Let me, Sir, bespeak your favour and compassion.

You will have the favour of every body, Niece, when you know how to deserve it.

If ever I deserved it, I deserve it now.—I have been hardly used!—I have made proposals that ought to be accepted, and such as would not have been *asked* of me. What have I done, that I must be banished and confined thus disgracefully? that I must not be allowed to have any free-will in an article that concerns my present and future happiness?—

Miss Clary, replied my uncle, you have had your will in every thing till now; and this makes your parents' wills sit so heavy upon you.

My will, Sir! be pleased to allow me to ask, what was my will till now, but my father's will, and yours and my uncle Harlowe's will?—Has it not been my pride to obey and oblige?—I never asked a favour, that I did not first sit down and consider, if it were *fit* to be granted. And now, to shew my obedience, have I not offered to live single?—Have I not offered to divest myself of my grandfather's bounty, and to cast myself upon my father's! and that to be withdrawn, whenever I disoblige him? Why, dear, good Sir, am I to be made unhappy in a point so concerning my happiness?

Your grandfather's estate is not wished from you. You are not desired to live a single life. You know *our* motives, and we guess at *yours*. And, let me tell you, well as we love you, we should much sooner choose to follow you to the grave, than that *yours* should take place.

I will engage never to marry any man, without my father's consent, and yours, Sir, and every body's. Did I ever give you cause to doubt my word?—And here I will take the solemnest oath that can be offered me—

That is the matrimonial one, interrupted he, with a big voice—and to this gentleman.—It shall, it shall, cousin Clary!—And the more you oppose it, the worse it shall be for you.

This, and before the man, who seemed to assume courage upon it, highly provoked me.

Then, Sir, you shall sooner follow me to the grave *indeed*.—I will undergo the cruelest death—I will even consent to enter into the awful vault of my ancestors, and have that bricked up upon me, rather than consent to be miserable for life. And, Mr. Solmes, turning to him, take notice of what I say: *This* or *any* death, I will sooner undergo [that will quickly be over] than be yours, and for *ever* unhappy!

My uncle was in a terrible rage upon this. He took Mr. Solmes by the hand, shocked as the man seemed to be, and drew him to the window—Don't be surprised, Mr. Solmes, don't be concerned at *this*. We know, and rapt out a sad oath, what women will say in their wrath: the wind is not more boisterous, nor more changeable; and again he swore to that.—If you think it worth your while to wait for such an ungrateful girl as this, I'll engage she'll *veer about;* I'll engage she *shall*. And a third time violently swore to it.

Then coming up to me (who had thrown myself, very much disordered by my vehemence, into the most distant window) as if he would have beat me; his face violently working, his hands clinched, and his teeth set —Yes, yes, yes, hissed the poor gentleman, you shall, you shall, you shall, cousin Clary, be Mr. Solmes's wife; we will see that you shall; and this in one week at farthest.—And then a fourth time he confirmed it! —Poor gentleman! how he swore!

I am sorry, Sir, said I, to see you in such a passion. All this, I am but too sensible, is owing to my brother's instigation; who would not himself give the instance of duty that is sought to be exacted from me. It is best for me to withdraw. I shall but provoke you farther, I fear: for although I would gladly obey you if I could, yet this is a point

determined with me; and I cannot so much as *wish* to get it over.

How could I avoid making these strong declarations, the man in presence?

I was going out at the door I came in at; the gentlemen looking upon one another, as if referring to each other what to do, or whether to engage my stay, or suffer me to go; and whom should I meet at the door but my brother, who had heard all that had passed!

He bolted upon me so unexpectedly, that I was surprised. He took my hand, and grasped it with violence: Return, pretty Miss, said he; return, if you please. You shall not yet be *bricked up*. Your *instigating* brother shall save you from that!—O thou fallen angel, said he, peering up to my downcast face —such a sweetness *here!*—and such an obstinacy *there!* tapping my neck—O thou true woman—though so young!—But you shall not have your rake: remember that; in a loud whisper, as if he would be decently indecent before the man. You shall be redeemed, and this worthy gentleman, raising his voice, will be so good as to redeem you from ruin—and hereafter you will bless him, or have reason to bless him, for his *condescension;* that was the brutal brother's word!

He had led me up to meet Mr. Solmes, whose hand he took, as he held mine. Here, Sir, said he, take the rebel daughter's hand: I give it you now: she shall confirm the gift in a week's time; or will have neither father, mother, nor uncles, to boast of.

I snatched my hand away.

How now, Miss!—

And how now, Sir!—What right have *you* to dispose of my hand?—If you govern every body else, you shall not govern me; especially in a point so immediately relative to myself, and in which you neither have, nor ever shall have, any thing to do.

I would have broken from him; but he held my hand too fast.

Let me go, Sir!—Why am I thus treated?—You *design*, I doubt not, with your unmanly gripings, to hurt me, as you do: But again I ask, wherefore is it that I am to be thus treated by *you?*

He tossed my hand from him with a whirl, that pained my very shoulder. I wept, and held my other hand to the part.

Mr. Solmes blamed him. So did my uncle.

He had no patience, he said, with such a perverse one; and to think of the reflections upon himself, before he entered. He had only given me back the hand I had not deserved he should touch. It was one of my arts to pretend to be pained.

Mr. Solmes said, he would sooner give up all his hopes of me, than that I should be used unkindly.—And he offered to plead in my behalf to them both; and applied himself with a bow, as if for my approbation of his interposition.

Interpose not, Mr. Solmes, said I, to save me from my brother's violence. I cannot wish to owe an obligation to a man whose ungenerous perseverance is the occasion of *that* violence, and of all my disgraceful sufferings.

How generous in you, Mr. Solmes, said my brother, to interpose so kindly in behalf of such an immovable spirit! I beg of you to persist in your address—the unnatural brother called it *address!*—For all our family's sake, and for *her* sake too, if you love her, persist!—Let us save her, if possible, from ruining herself. Look at her person! [and he gazed at me, from head to foot, pointing at me, as he referred to Mr. Solmes,] think of her fine qualities!—all the world confesses them, and we all gloried in her till now. She is worth saving; and, after two or three

He tossed my hand from him with a whirl that pained my very shoulder.

more struggles, she will be yours, and take my word for it, will reward your patience. Talk not, therefore, of giving up your hopes, for a little whining folly. She has entered upon a parade, which she knows not how to quit with a *female grace*. You have only her pride and her obstinacy to encounter: and depend upon it, you will be as happy a man in a fortnight, as a married man *can* be.

You have heard me say, my dear, that my brother has always taken a liberty to reflect upon our sex, and upon matrimony!—He would not, if he did not think it *wit* to do so!—Just as poor Mr. Wyerley, and others, whom we both know, profane and ridicule scripture; and all to evince their pretensions to the same pernicious talent, and to have it thought they are too wise to be religious.

Mr. Solmes, with a self-satisfied air, presumptuously said, he would suffer every thing, to *oblige* my family, and to *save* me: and doubted not to be amply rewarded, could he be so happy as to succeed at last.

Mr. Solmes, said I, if you have any regard for your own happiness, (*mine* is out of the question with you, you have not generosity enough to make *that* any part of your scheme,) prosecute no farther your *address*, as my brother calls it. It is but *just* to tell you, that I could not bring my heart so much as to *think* of you, without the utmost disapprobation, *before* I was used as I have been:—And can you think I am such a slave, such a *poor* slave, as to be brought to change my mind by the violent usage I have met with?

And you, Sir, turning to my brother, if you think that *meekness* always indicates *tameness;* and that there is no *magnanimity* without *bluster;* own yourself mistaken for once: for you shall have reason to judge from henceforth, that a generous mind is not to be forced; and that—

No more, said the imperious wretch, I charge you, lifting up his hands and eyes. Then turning to my uncle, Do you hear, Sir? this is your once faultless niece! This is your favourite!

Mr. Solmes looked as if he knew not what to think of the matter; and had I been left alone with him, I saw plainly I could have got rid of him easily enough.

My uncle came to me, looking up also to my face, and down to my feet: and is it possible this can be *you?* All this violence from *you*, Miss Clary?

Yes, it *is* possible, Sir—and, I will presume to say, this vehemence on my side is but the natural consequence of the usage I have met with, and the rudeness I am treated with, even in your presence, by a brother, who has no more right to controul me, than I have to controul him.

This usage, cousin Clary, was not till all other means were tried with you.

Tried! to what end, Sir?—Do I contend for any thing more than a mere negative? You *may*, Sir, [turning to Mr. Solmes,] *possibly* you may be induced the *rather* to persevere thus ungenerously, as the usage I have met with for your sake, and what you have now seen offered to me by my brother, will shew you what I *can* bear, were my evil destiny ever to make me yours.

Lord, Madam, cried Solmes, [all this time distorted into twenty different attitudes, as my brother and my uncle were blessing themselves, and speaking only to each other by their eyes, and by their working features; Lord, Madam,] what a construction is this!

A fair construction, Sir, interrupted I: for he that can see a person, whom he pretends to value, thus treated, and approve of it, must be capable of treating her thus himself. And that you *do* approve of it, is evident by your declared perseverance, when you know

I am confined, banished, and insulted, in order to make me consent to be what I never *can* be: and this, let me tell you, as I have often told others, not from motives of obstinacy, but aversion.

Excuse me, Sir, turning to my uncle—to you, as to my father's brother, I owe duty. I beg *your* pardon, that I cannot obey you.—But as for my *brother;* he is *but* my brother; he shall not constrain me.—And [turning to the unnatural wretch—I will call him wretch] knit your brows, Sir, and frown as you will, I will ask you, would *you*, in my case, make the sacrifices I am willing to make, to obtain every one's favour? If *not*, what right have you to treat me thus; and to procure me to be treated as I have been for so long a time past?

I had put myself by this time into great disorder: they were silent, and seemed by their looks to want to talk to one another (walking about in violent disorders too) between whiles. I sat down fanning myself, (as it happened, against the glass,) and I could perceive my colour go and come; and being sick to the very heart, and apprehensive of fainting, I rung.

Betty came in. I called for a glass of water, and drank it: but nobody minded me. I heard my brother pronounce the words, Art! Female Art! to Solmes; which, together with the apprehension that he would not be welcome, I suppose kept *him* back. Else I could see the man was affected. And (still fearing I should faint) I arose, and taking hold of Betty's arm, let me hold by you, Betty, said I: let me withdraw. And moved with trembling feet towards the door, and then turned about, and made a courtesy to my uncle—Permit me, Sir, said I, to withdraw.

Whither go you, Niece? said my uncle: we have not done with you yet. I charge you depart not. Mr.

Solmes has something to open to you, that will astonish you—and you *shall* hear it.

Only, Sir, by your leave, for a few minutes into the air. I will return, if you command it. I will hear all that I am to hear; that it may be over *now* and *for ever*.—You will go with me, Betty?

And so, without any farther prohibition, I retired into the garden; and there casting myself upon the first seat, and throwing Betty's apron over my face, leaning against her side, my hands between hers, I gave way to a violent burst of grief, or passion, or both; which, as it seemed, saved my heart from breaking, for I was sensible of an immediate relief.

I have already given you specimens of *Mrs.* Betty's impertinence. I shall not, therefore, trouble you with more: for the wench, notwithstanding this my distress, took great liberties with me, after she saw me a little recovered, and as I walked farther into the garden; insomuch that I was obliged to silence her by an absolute prohibition of saying another word to me; and then she dropped behind me sullen and gloomy.

It was near an hour before I was sent for in again. The messenger was my cousin Dolly Hervey, who, with an eye of compassion and respect, (for Miss Hervey always loved me, and calls herself my scholar, as you know,) told me, my company was desired.

Betty left us.

Who commands my attendance, Miss? said I—Have you not been in tears, my dear?

Who can forbear tears? said she.

Why, what is the matter, cousin Dolly?—Sure, nobody is entitled to weep in this family, but *me!*

Yes, *I* am, Madam, said she, because I love you.

I kissed her: And is it for me, my sweet Cousin, that you shed tears?—There never was love lost between us: but tell me, what is designed to be done with

me, that I have this kind instance of your compassion for me?

You must take no notice of what I tell you, said the dear girl: but my mamma has been weeping for you, too, with me; but durst not let any body see it: O my Dolly, said my mamma, there never was so set a malice in man as in your cousin James Harlowe. They will ruin the flower and ornament of their family.

As how, Miss Dolly?—Did she not explain herself?—As how, my dear?

Yes; she said, Mr. Solmes would have given up his claim to you; for he said, you hated him, and there were no hopes; and your mamma was willing he should; and to have you taken at your word, to renounce Mr. Lovelace, and to live single. My mamma was for it too; for they heard all that passed between you and uncle Antony, and cousin James; saying, it was impossible to think of prevailing upon you to have Mr. Solmes. Uncle Harlowe seemed in the same way of thinking; at least, my mamma says he did not say any thing to the contrary. But your papa was immovable, and was angry at your mamma and mine upon it. —And hereupon your brother, your sister, and my uncle Antony, joined in, and changed the scene entirely. In short, she says, that Mr. Solmes had great matters engaged to him. He owned, that you were the finest young lady in England, and he would be content to be but little beloved, if he could *not*, after marriage, engage your heart, for the sake of having the honour to call you his but for one twelvemonth—I suppose he would break your heart the next—for he is a cruel-hearted man, I am sure.

My friends may break my heart, cousin Dolly; but Mr. Solmes will never have it in his power to break it.

I do not know that, Miss: you will have good luck to avoid having him, by what I can find; for my

mamma says, they are all now of one mind, herself excepted; and she is forced to be silent, your papa and brother are both so outrageous.

I am got above minding my brother, cousin Dolly: —he is *but* my brother. But to my father I owe duty and obedience, if I could comply.

We are apt to be fond of any body that will side with us, when oppressed or provoked. I always loved my cousin Dolly; but now she endeared herself to me ten times more, by her soothing concern for me. I asked what *she* would do, were she in my case?

Without hesitation, she replied, have Mr. Lovelace out of hand, and take up her own estate, if she were me; and there would be an end to it.—And Mr. Lovelace, she said, was a fine gentleman:—Mr. Solmes was not worthy to *buckle his shoes*.

Miss Hervey told me further, that her mother was desired to come to me, to fetch me in; but she excused herself. I should have all my friends, she said, she believed, sit in judgment upon me.

I wish it had been so. But, as I have been told since, neither my father nor my mother would trust themselves with seeing me: the one it seems for passion sake; my mother for tender considerations.

By this time we entered the house. Miss accompanied me into the parlour, and left me, as a person devoted, I then thought.

Nobody was there. I sat down, and had leisure to weep; reflecting upon what my cousin Dolly had told me.

They were all in my sister's parlour adjoining: for I heard a confused mixture of voices, some louder than others, which drowned the more compassionating accents.

Female accents I could distinguish the drowned ones to be. O my dear! what a hard-hearted sex is the

other! Children of the same parents, how came they by their cruelty?—Do they get it by travel?—Do they get it by conversation with one another?—Or how do they get it?—Yet my sister, too, is as hard-hearted as any of them. But this may be no exception neither: for she has been thought to be masculine in her air and her spirit. She has then, perhaps, a soul of the *other* sex in a body of *ours*. And so, for the honour of *our own*, will I judge of every woman for the future, who imitating the rougher manners of men, acts unbeseeming the gentleness of her own sex.

Forgive me, my dear friend, for breaking into my story by these reflections. Were I rapidly to pursue my narration, without thinking, without reflecting, I believe I should hardly be able to keep in my right mind: since vehemence and passion would then be always uppermost; but while I *think* as I write, I cool, and my hurry of spirits is allayed.

I believe I was above a quarter of an hour enjoying my own comfortless contemplations, before any body came in to me; for they seemed to be in full debate. My aunt looked in first; O my dear, said she, are you there? and withdrew hastily to apprize them of it.

And then (as agreed upon I suppose) in came my uncle Antony, crediting Mr. Solmes with the words, *Let me lead you in, my dear friend*, having hold of his hand; while the new-made beau awkwardly followed, but more edgingly, as I may say, setting his feet mincingly, to avoid treading upon his leader's heels. Excuse me, my dear, this seeming levity; but those we do not love, appear in every thing ungraceful to us.

I stood up. My uncle looked very surly.—Sit down!—Sit down, Girl, said he.—And drawing a chair near me, he placed his *dear* friend in it, whether he would or not, I having taken my seat. And my uncle sat on the other side of me.

Well, Niece, taking my hand, we shall have very little more to say to you than we have already said, as to the subject that is so distasteful to you—unless, indeed, you have better considered of the matter—And first let me know if you have?

The matter wants no consideration, Sir.

Very well, very well, *Madam!* said my uncle, withdrawing his hands from mine: Could I ever have thought of this from you?

For God's sake, dearest Madam, said Mr. Solmes, folding his hands—And there he stopped.

For God's sake, *what*, Sir?—How came God's sake, and your sake, I pray you, to be the same?

This silenced *him*. My uncle could *only* be angry; and that he was before.

Well, well, well, Mr. Solmes, said my uncle, no more of supplication. You have not *confidence* enough to expect a woman's favour.

He then was pleased to hint what great things he had designed to do for me; and that it was more for *my* sake, after he returned from the Indies, than for the sake of any *other* of the family, that he had resolved to live a single life.—But now, concluded he, that the perverse girl despises all the great things it was once as much in my will, as it is in my power, to do for her, I will change my measures.

I told him, that I most sincerely thanked him for all his kind intentions to me: but that I was willing to resign all claim to any *other* of his favours than kind looks and kind words.

He looked about him this way and that.

Mr. Solmes looked pitifully down.

But both being silent, I was sorry, I added, that I had too much reason to say a very harsh thing, as I might be thought; which was, That if he would but be pleased to convince my brother and sister, that he

was absolutely determined to alter his generous purposes towards me, it might possibly procure me better treatment from both, than I was otherwise likely to have.

My uncle was very much displeased. But he had not the opportunity to express his displeasure, as he seemed preparing to do; for in came my brother in exceeding great wrath; and called me several vile names. His success hitherto, in his device against me, had set him above keeping even decent measures.

Was this my spiteful construction? he asked—Was this the interpretation I put upon his brotherly care of me, and concern for me, in order to prevent my ruining myself?

It *is*, indeed it *is*, said I: I know no other way to account for your late behaviour to me: and before your face, I repeat my request to my uncle, and I will make it to my other uncle whenever I am permitted to see him, that they will confer all their favours upon you, and upon my sister; and only make me happy (it is all I wish for!) in their kind looks, and kind words.

How they all gazed upon one another!—But could I be less peremptory before the man?

And, as to *your* care and concern for me, Sir, turning to my brother; once more I desire it not. You are *but* my brother. My father and mother, I bless God, are both living; and were they *not*, you have given me abundant reason to say, that you are the very last person I would wish to have any concern for me.

How, Niece! And is a brother, an *only* brother, of so little consideration with you, as this comes to? And ought he to have no concern for his sister's honour, and the family's honour.

My honour, Sir!—I desire none of his concern for that! It never was endangered till it had his undesired concern!—Forgive me, Sir—but when my brother

knows how to act like a brother, or behave like a gentleman, he may deserve more consideration from me than it is possible for me now to think he does.

I thought my brother would have beat me upon this: but my uncle stood between us.

Violent girl, however, he called me—Who, said he, who would have thought it of her?

Then was Mr. Solmes told, that I was unworthy of his pursuit.

But Mr. Solmes warmly took my part: he could not bear, he said, that I should be treated so roughly.

And so very much did he exert himself on this occasion, and so patiently was his warmth received by my brother, that I began to suspect, that it was a contrivance to make me think myself obliged to him; and that this might perhaps be one end of the pressed-for interview.

The very suspicion of this low artifice, violent as I was thought to be before, put me still more out of patience; and my uncle and my brother again praising his wonderful generosity, and his noble return of good for evil, You are a happy man, Mr. Solmes, said I, that you can so *easily* confer obligations upon a whole family, except upon one ungrateful person of it, whom you seem to intend *most* to oblige; but who being made unhappy by your favour, desires not to owe to *you* any protection from the violence of a brother.

Then was I a rude, an ungrateful, and unworthy creature.

I own it all—all, all you can call me, or think me, Brother, do I own. I own my unworthiness with regard to this gentleman. I take your word for his abundant merit, which I have neither leisure nor inclination to examine into—it may perhaps be as great as your own—but yet I cannot thank him for his mediation: For who sees not, looking at my uncle,

that this is giving himself a merit with every body at my expense?

Then turning to my brother, who seemed surprised into silence by my warmth, I must also acknowledge, Sir, the favour of *your* superabundant care for me. But I discharge you of it; at least, while I have the happiness of nearer and dearer relations. You have given me no reason to think better of *your* prudence, than of my *own*. I am independent of *you*, Sir, though I never desire to be so of my father: and although I wish for the good opinion of my uncles, it is *all* I wish for from them: and this, Sir, I repeat, *to make you and my sister easy*.

Instantly almost came in Betty, in a great hurry, looking at me as spitefully as if she were my *sister:* Sir, said she to my brother, my master desires to speak with you this moment at the door.

He went to that which led into my sister's parlour; and this sentence I heard thundered from the mouth of one who had a right to all my reverence: Son James, let the rebel be this moment carried away to my brother's —this very moment—she shall not stay one hour more under my roof!

I trembled; I was ready to sink. Yet, not knowing what I did, or said, I flew to the door, and would have opened it: but my brother pulled it to, and held it close by the key—O my Papa!—my dear Papa! said I, falling upon my knees, at the door—admit your child to your presence!—Let me but plead my cause at your feet!—Oh! reprobate not thus your distressed daughter!

My uncle put his handkerchief to his eyes. Mr. Solmes made a still more grievous face than he had before. But my brother's marble heart was untouched.

I will not stir from my knees, continued I, without admission; at this door I beg it!—Oh! let it be the

door of mercy! and open it to me, honoured Sir, I beseech you!—But this once, this once! although you were afterwards to shut it against me for ever!

The door was endeavoured to be opened on the inside, which made my brother let go the key on a sudden; and I pressing against it, (all the time remaining on my knees,) fell flat on my face into the other parlour; however without hurting myself. But every body was gone, except Betty, who I suppose was the person that endeavoured to open the door. She helped to raise me up; and when I was on my feet, I looked round that apartment, and seeing nobody there, re-entered the other, leaning upon her; and then threw myself into the chair which I had sat in before; and my eyes overflowed, to my great relief: while my uncle Antony, my brother, and Mr. Solmes, left me, and went to my other relations.

What passed among them, I know not: but my brother came in by the time I had tolerably recovered myself, with a settled and haughty gloom upon his brow—Your father and mother command you instantly to prepare for your uncle Antony's. You need not be solicitous about what you shall take with you: you may give Betty your keys—Take them, Betty, if the perverse one has them about her, and carry them to her mother. She will take care to send every thing after you that you shall want—but another night you will not be permitted to stay in this house.

I don't choose to give my keys to any body, except to my mother, and into her own hands.—You see how much I am disordered. It may cost me my life, to be hurried away so suddenly. I beg to be indulged till next Monday at least.

That will not be granted you. So prepare for this very very night. And give up your keys. Give them to *me*, Miss. I'll carry them to your mother.

Excuse me, Brother. Indeed I won't.

Indeed you must. Have you any thing you are afraid should be seen by your mother?

Not if I be permitted to attend her.

I'll make a report accordingly.

He went out.

In came Miss Dolly Hervey: I am sorry, Madam, to be the messenger—but your mamma insists upon your sending up all the keys of your cabinet, library, and drawers.

Tell my mother, that I yield them up to her commands: tell her, I make no conditions with my mother: but if she find nothing she shall disapprove of, I beg that she will permit me to tarry here a few days longer. —Try, my Dolly, [the dear girl sobbing with grief;] try if your gentleness cannot prevail for me.

She wept still more, and said, It is sad, very sad, to see matters thus carried!

She took the keys, and wrapped her arms about me; and begged me to excuse her for her message; and would have said more; but Betty's presence awed her, as I saw.

Don't pity me, my dear, said I. It will be imputed to you as a fault. You see who is by.

The insolent wench scornfully smiled: One young lady pitying another in things of this nature, looks promising in the youngest, I must needs say.

I bid her begone from my presence.

She would most gladly go, she said, were she not to stay about me by my mother's order.

It soon appeared for what she staid; for I offering to go up stairs to my apartment when my cousin went from me with the keys, she told me she was commanded (to her very great regret, she must own) to desire me not to go up at present.

Such a bold face, as she, I told her, should not hinder me.

She instantly rang the bell, and in came my brother, meeting me at the door.

Return, return, Miss—no going up yet.

I went in again, and throwing myself upon the window-seat, wept bitterly.

Shall I give you the particulars of a ridiculously-spiteful conversation that passed between my brother and me, in the time that he (with Betty) was in office to keep me in the parlour while my closet was searching!—But I think I will not. It can answer no good end.

I desired several times, while he staid, to have leave to retire to my apartment; but was denied. The search, I suppose, was not over.

Bella was one of those employed in it. They could not have a more diligent searcher. How happy it was they were disappointed!

But when my sister could not find the *cunning creature*'s papers, I was to stand another visit from Mr. Solmes —preceded now by my aunt Hervey, solely against her will, I could see that; accompanied by my uncle Antony, in order to keep her steady, I suppose.

But being a little heavy (for it is now past two in the morning) I will lie down in my clothes, to indulge the kind summons, if it will be indulged.

Three o'clock, Wednesday Morning.

I could not sleep—Only dozed away one half-hour.

My aunt Hervey accosted me thus:—O my dear child, what troubles do you give to your parents, and to every body!—I wonder at you!

I am sorry for it, Madam.

Sorry for it, child!—*Why* then so very obstinate?—Come, sit down, my dear. I will sit next you; taking my hand.

My uncle placed Mr. Solmes on the other side of

me: himself over-against me, almost close to me. Was I not finely beset, my dear?

Your brother, child, said my aunt, is too passionate —his zeal for *your* welfare pushes him on a little too vehemently.

Very true, said my uncle: but no more of this. We would now be glad to see if milder means will do with you—though, indeed, they were tried before.

I asked my aunt, If it were necessary, that that gentleman should be present?

There is a reason that he should, said my aunt, as you will hear by-and-by.—But I must tell you, first, that, thinking you was a little too angrily treated by your brother, your mother desired me to try what gentler means would do upon a spirit so generous as we used to think yours.

Nothing can be done, Madam, I must presume to say, if this gentleman's address be the end.

She looked upon my uncle, who bit his lip; and looked upon Mr. Solmes, who rubbed his cheek; and shaking her head, Good, dear creature, said she, be calm. Let me ask you, If something would have been done, had you been more gently used, than you seem to think you have been?

No, Madam, I cannot say it would, in this gentleman's favour. You know, Madam, you know, Sir, to my uncle, I ever valued myself upon my sincerity: and once indeed had the happiness to be valued for it.

My uncle took Mr. Solmes aside. I heard him say, whispering, She must, she shall, still be yours.—We'll see, who'll conquer, parents or child, uncles or niece. I doubt not to be witness to all this being got over, and many a good-humoured jest made of this high phrensy!

I was heartily vexed.

Though we cannot find out, continued he, yet we

guess, who puts her upon this obstinate behaviour. It is not natural to her, man. Nor would I concern myself so much about her, but that I know what I say to be true, and intend to do great things for her.

I will hourly pray for that happy time, whispered as audibly Mr. Solmes. I never will revive the remembrance of what is now so painful to me.

Well, but, Niece, I am to tell you, said my aunt, that the sending up your keys, without making any conditions, has wrought for you what nothing else could have done. That, and the not finding any thing that could give them umbrage, together with Mr. Solmes's interposition—

O Madam, let me not owe an obligation to Mr. Solmes. I cannot repay it, except by my *thanks;* and *those* only on condition that he will decline his suit. To my thanks, Sir, [turning to him,] if you have a heart capable of humanity, if you have any esteem for me for my *own* sake, I beseech you to entitle yourself!—I beseech you, do!—

O Madam, cried he, believe, believe, believe me, it is impossible. While you are single, I *will* hope. While that hope is encouraged by so many worthy friends, I *must* persevere. I must not slight *them*, Madam, because you slight *me*.

I answered him only with a look; but it was of high disdain; and turning from him,—But what favour, dear Madam, [to my aunt,] has the instance of duty you mention procured me?

Your mother and Mr. Solmes, replied my aunt, have prevailed, that your request to stay here till Monday next shall be granted, if you will promise to go cheerfully then.

Let me but choose my own visiters, and I will go to my uncle's house with pleasure.

Well, Niece, said my aunt, we must wave this

subject, I find. We will now proceed to another, which will require your utmost attention. It will give you the reason why Mr. Solmes's presence is requisite—

Ay, said my uncle, and shew you what sort of a man somebody is. Mr. Solmes, pray favour us, in the first place, with the letter you received from your anonymous friend.

I will, Sir. And out he pulled a letter-case, and taking out a letter, it is written in answer to one, sent to the person. It is superscribed, *To Roger Solmes, Esq.* It begins thus: *Honoured Sir*—

I beg your pardon, Sir, said I: but what, pray, is the intent of reading this letter to me?

To let you know what a vile man you are thought to have set your heart upon, said my uncle, in an audible whisper.

If, Sir, it be suspected, that I have set my heart upon any other, why is Mr. Solmes to give himself any further trouble about me?

Only hear, Niece, said my aunt; only hear what Mr. Solmes has to read and to say to you on this head.

If, Madam, Mr. Solmes will be pleased to declare, that he has no view to serve, no end to promote, for himself, I will hear any thing he shall read. But if the contrary, you must allow me to say, that it will abate with me a great deal of the weight of whatever he shall produce.

Hear it but read, Niece, said my aunt—

Hear it read, said my uncle. You are so ready to take part with—

With any body, Sir, that is accused anonymously, and from interested motives.

He began to read; and there seemed to be a heavy load of charges in this letter against the poor criminal: but I stopped the reading of it, and said, It will not be *my* fault, if this vilified man be not as indifferent

to me, as one whom I never saw. If he be otherwise at present, which I neither own, nor deny, it proceeds from the strange methods taken to prevent it. Do not let one cause unite him and me, and we shall not be united. If my offer to live single be accepted, he shall be no more to me than *this* gentleman.

Still—Proceed, Mr. Solmes—Hear it out, Niece, was my uncle's cry.

But to what purpose, Sir! said I—Has not Mr. Solmes a *view* in this? And, besides, can any thing worse be said of Mr. Lovelace, than I have heard said for several months past?

But this, said my uncle, and what Mr. Solmes can tell you besides, amounts to the *fullest proof*—

Was the unhappy man, then, so freely treated in his character before, *without* full proof? I beseech you, Sir, give me not *too good* an opinion of Mr. Lovelace; as I *may* have, if such pains be taken to make him guilty, by one who means not his reformation by it; nor to do good, if I may presume to say so in this case, to any body but himself.

I see very plainly, girl, said my uncle, your prepossession, your fond prepossession, for the person of a man without morals.

Indeed, my dear, said my aunt, you too much justify all your apprehension. Surprising! that a young creature of virtue and honour should thus esteem a man of a quite opposite character!

Dear Madam, do not conclude against me too hastily. I believe Mr. Lovelace is far from being so good as he ought to be: but if every man's private life were searched into by *prejudiced people*, set on for that purpose, I know not whose reputation would be safe. I love a virtuous character, as much in man as in woman. I think it is requisite, and as meritorious, in the one as in the other. And, if left to myself, I

would prefer a person of such a character to royalty without it.

Why then, said my uncle—

Give me leave, Sir—but I may venture to say, that many of those who have escaped censure, have not merited applause.

Permit me to observe further, That Mr. Solmes himself may not be absolutely faultless. I never heard of his virtues. Some vices I have heard of—Excuse me, Mr. Solmes, I speak to your face—The text about *casting the first stone* affords an excellent lesson.

He looked down; but was silent.

Mr. Lovelace may have vices *you* have not. You may have others, which *he* has not. I speak not this to defend him, or to accuse you. No man is bad, no one is good, in *every thing*. Mr. Lovelace, for example, is said to be implacable, and to hate my friends: that does not make me value him the more: but give me leave to say, that *they* hate him as much. Mr. Solmes has his antipathies, likewise; very *strong* ones, and those to his *own relations;* which I don't find to be the other's fault; for he lives well with *his* —yet he may have as bad:—worse, pardon me, he cannot have, in my poor opinion: for what must be the man, who *hates his own flesh?*

You know not, Madam;
You know not, Niece;
You know not, Clary;
} all in one breath.

I may not, nor do I desire to know Mr. Solmes's reasons. It *concerns* not me to know them: but the world, even the impartial part of it, accuses him. If the world is unjust or rash, in *one* man's case, why may it not be so in *another*'s? That's all I mean by it. Nor can there by a greater sign of want of merit, than where a man seeks to pull down another's character, in order to build up his own.

The poor man's face was all this time overspread with confusion, twisted, as it were, and all awry, neither mouth nor nose standing in the middle of it. He looked as if he were ready to cry: and had he been capable of pitying me, I had certainly tried to pity him.

They all three gazed upon one another in silence.

My aunt, I saw (at least I thought so) looked as if she would have been glad she might have appeared to approve of what I said. She but feebly blamed me, when she spoke, for not hearing what Mr. Solmes had to say. He himself seemed not now very earnest to be heard. My uncle said, There was no talking to me. And I should have absolutely silenced both gentlemen, had not my brother come in again to their assistance.

This was the strange speech he made at his entrance, his eyes flaming with anger; This prating girl has struck you all dumb, I perceive. Persevere, however, Mr. Solmes. I have heard every word she has said: and I know of no other method of being even with her, than after she is yours, to make her as sensible of your power, as she now makes you of her insolence.

Fie, cousin Harlowe! said my aunt—Could I have thought a *brother* would have said this, to a gentleman, of a *sister?*

I must tell you, Madam, said he, that *you* give the rebel courage. You yourself seem to favour too much the arrogance of her sex in her; otherwise she durst not have thus stopped her uncle's mouth by reflections upon him; as well as denied to hear a gentleman tell her the danger she is in from a libertine, whose protection, as she as plainly hinted, she intends to claim against her family.

Stopped my uncle's mouth, by reflections upon him, Sir!

said I, how can that be! how *dare* you to make such an application as this!

My aunt wept at his reflection upon her.—Cousin, said she to him, if *this* be the thanks I have for my trouble, I have done: your father would not treat me thus—and I *will* say, that the hint you gave was an unbrotherly one.

Not more unbrotherly than all the rest of his conduct to me, of late, Madam, said I. I see by this specimen of his violence, how every body has been brought into his measures. Had I any the least apprehension of ever being in Mr. Solmes's power, this *might* have affected me. But you see, Sir, to Mr. Solmes, what a conduct is thought necessary to enable you to arrive at your ungenerous end. You see how my brother *courts* for you.

I disclaim Mr. Harlowe's violence, Madam, with all my soul. I will never remind you—

Silence, worthy Sir, said I; I will take care you never shall have the opportunity.

Less violence, Clary, said my uncle. Cousin James, you are as much to blame as your sister.

In then came my sister. Brother, said she, you kept not your promise. You are *thought* to be to blame within, as well as here. Were not Mr. Solmes's generosity and affection to the girl *well* known, what you have said would be inexcusable. My father desires to speak with you; and with you, aunt; and with you, uncle; and with you, Mr. Solmes, if you please.

They all four withdrew into the next apartment.

I stood silent, as not knowing presently how to take this intervention of my sister's. But she left me not long at a loss—O thou perverse thing, said she [poking out her angry face at me, when they were all gone, but speaking spitefully low]—what trouble do you give to us all!

You and my brother, Bella, said I, give trouble to yourselves; yet neither you nor he have any business to concern yourselves about me.

She threw out some spiteful expressions, still in a low voice, as if she chose not to be heard without; and I thought it best to oblige her to raise her tone a little, if I could. If I *could*, did I say? It is easy to make a passionate spirit answer all one's views upon it.

She accordingly flamed out in a raised tone: and this brought my cousin Dolly in to us. Miss Harlowe, your company is desired.

I will come presently, cousin Dolly.

But again provoking a severity from me which she could not bear, and calling me names! in once more come Dolly, with another message, that her company was desired.

Not mine, I doubt, Miss Dolly, said I.

The sweet-tempered girl burst out into tears, and shook her head.

Go in before me, child, said Bella, [vexed to see her concern for me,] with thy sharp face like a new moon: What dost thou cry for? is it to make thy keen face look still keener?

I believe Bella was blamed, too, when she went in; for I heard her say, the *creature* was so provoking, there was no keeping a resolution.

Mr. Solmes, after a little while, came in again by himself, to take leave of me: full of scrapes and compliments; but too well tutored and encouraged, to give me hope of his declining his suit. He begged me not to impute to him any of the severe things to which he had been a sorrowful witness. He besought my compassion, as he called it.

He said, the result was, that he had still hopes given him; and, although discouraged by me, he was

resolved to persevere, while I remained single.—And such long and such painful services he talked of, as never before were heard of.

I told him in the strongest manner, what he had to trust to.

Yet still he determined to persist.—While I was no man's else, he must hope.

What! said I, will you still persist, when I declare, as I now do, that my affections are engaged?—And let my brother make the most of it.

He knew my principles, and adored me for them. He doubted not, that it was in his power to make me happy: and he was sure I would not want the will to be so.

I assured him, that were I to be carried to my uncle's, it should answer no end; for I would never see him; nor receive a line from him; nor hear a word in his favour, whoever were the person who should mention him to me.

He was sorry for it. He must be miserable, were I to hold in that mind. But he doubted not, that I might be induced by my father and uncles to change it—

Never, never, he might depend upon it.

It was richly worth his patience, and the trial.

At my *expense?*—At the price of all my *happiness*, Sir?

He hoped I should be induced to think otherwise.

And then would he have run into his fortune, his settlements, his affection—vowing, that never man loved a woman with so sincere a passion as he loved me.

I stopped him, as to the first part of his speech: and to the second, of the sincerity of his passion, What then, Sir, said I, is your love to one, who must assure you, that never young creature looked upon man with

a more sincere disapprobation, than I look upon you? And tell me, what argument can you urge, that this *true* declaration answers not before-hand?

Dearest Madam, what can I say?—On my knees I beg—

And down the ungraceful wretch dropped on his knees.

Let me not kneel in vain, Madam: let me not be thus despised.—And he looked most odiously sorrowful.

I have kneeled too, Mr. Solmes: often have I kneeled: and I will kneel again—even to *you*, Sir, will I kneel, if there be so much merit in kneeling; provided you will not be the implement of my cruel brother's undeserved persecution.

If all the services, even to worship you, during my whole life—You, Madam, invoke and expect mercy; yet shew none—

Am I to be cruel to myself, to shew mercy to you; take my estate, Sir, with all my heart, since you are such a favourite in this house!—only leave me *myself*—the mercy you ask for, do you shew to others.

If you mean to my relations, Madam—unworthy as they are, all shall be done that you shall prescribe.

Who, I, Sir, to find you bowels you naturally have not? I to purchase *their* happiness by the forfeiture of *my own?* What I ask you for, is mercy to myself: that, since you seem to have some power over my relations, you will use it in my behalf. Tell them, that you see I cannot conquer my aversion to you: tell them, if you are a wise man, that you too much value your own happiness, to risk it against such a determined antipathy: tell them that I am unworthy of your offers: and that in mercy to yourself, as well as to me, you will not prosecute a suit so impossible to be granted.

I will risque all consequences, said the fell wretch, rising, with a countenance whitened over, as if with

malice, his hollow eyes flashing fire, and biting his under lip, to shew he could be *manly*. Your hatred, Madam, shall be no objection with me: and I doubt not in a few days to have it in my power to shew you—

You have it in your power, Sir—

He came well off—*To shew you* more generosity than, noble as you are said to be to others, you shew to me.

The man's face became his anger: it seems formed to express the passion.

At that instant, again came in my brother—Sister, Sister, Sister, said he, with his teeth set, act on the termagant part you have so newly assumed—most wonderfully well does it become you. It is but a short one, however. Tyranness in your turn, accuse others of your own guilt—But leave her, leave her, Mr. Solmes: her time is short. You'll find her humble and mortified enough very quickly. Then, how like a little tame fool will she look, with her conscience upbraiding her, and begging of you [with a whining voice, the barbarous brother spoke] to forgive and forget!

More he said, as he flew out, with a glowing face, upon Shorey's coming in to recall him on his violence.

I removed from chair to chair, excessively frighted and disturbed at this brutal treatment.

The man attempted to excuse himself, as being sorry for my brother's passion.

Leave me, leave me, Sir, fanning—or I shall faint. And indeed I thought I should.

He recommended himself to my favour with an air of assurance; augmented, as I thought, by a distress so visible in me; for he even snatched my trembling, my struggling hand; and ravished it to his odious mouth.

I flung from him with high disdain: and he with-

drew, bowing and cringing; self-gratified, and enjoying, as I thought, the confusion he saw me in.

The wretch is now, methinks, before me; and now I see him awkwardly striding backward, as he retired, till the edge of the opened door, which he ran against, remembered him to turn his welcome back upon me.

Upon his withdrawing, Betty brought me word, that I was permitted to go up to my own chamber: and was bid to consider of every thing: for my time was short. Nevertheless, she believed I might be permitted to stay till Saturday.

She tells me, that although my brother and sister were blamed for being so *hasty* with me, yet when they made *their* report, and my uncle Antony *his*, of *my* provocations, they were all more determined than ever in Mr. Solmes's favour.

The wretch himself, she tells me, pretends to be more in love with me than before; and to be rather delighted than discouraged with the conversation that passed between us. He ran on, she says, in raptures, about the grace wherewith I should dignify his board; and the like sort of stuff, either of *his* saying, or of *her* making.

She closed all with a Now is your time, Miss, to submit with a grace, and to make your own terms with him:—else, I can tell you, were I Mr. Solmes, it should be worse for you: And who, Miss, of *our* sex, proceeded the saucy creature, would admire a rakish gentleman, when she might be admired by a sober one to the end of the chapter?

She made this further speech to me on quitting my chamber—You have had *amazing* good luck, Miss. I must tell you, to keep your writings concealed so cunningly. You must needs think I know that you are always at your pen: and as you endeavour to hide that knowledge from me, I do not think myself obliged to

keep your secret. But I love not to aggravate. I had rather reconcile by much. Peace-making is my talent, and ever was. And had I been as much your foe, as you imagine, you had not perhaps been here now. But this, however, I do not say to make a merit with you, Miss: for, truly, it will be the better for you the sooner every thing is over with you. And better for me, and for every one else; that's certain. Yet one hint I must conclude with; that your pen and ink (soon as you are to go away) will not be long in your power, I do assure you, Miss. And then, having lost *that* amusement, it will be seen, how a mind so active as yours will be able to employ itself.

This hint alarms me so much, that I shall instantly begin to conceal, in different places, pens, ink, and paper; and to deposit some in the ivy summer-house, if I can find a safe place there; and, at the worst, I have got a pencil of black, and another of red lead, which I use in my drawings; and my patterns shall serve for paper, if I have no other.

How lucky it was, that I had got away my papers! They made a strict search for them; that I can see, by the disorderly manner they have left all things in: for you know that I am such an observer of method, that I can go to a bit of ribband, or lace, or edging, blindfold. The same in my books; which they have strangely disordered and mismatched; to look *behind* them, and *in* some of them, I suppose. My clothes too are rumpled not a little. No place has escaped them. To your hint, I thank you, are they indebted for their disappointment.

The pen, through heaviness and fatigue, dropt out of my fingers, at the word *indebted.* I resumed it, to finish the sentence; and to tell you, that I am,

Your for ever obliged and affectionate

Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XXXV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Wednesday, Eleven o'clock, April 5.

I MUST write as I have opportunity; making use of my concealed stores: for my pens and ink (all of each that they could find) are taken from me; as I shall tell you more particularly by and by.

About an hour ago, I deposited my long letter to you; as also, in the usual place, a billet to Mr. Lovelace, lest his impatience should put him upon some rashness; signifying, in four lines, 'That the interview was over; and that I hoped my steady refusal of Mr. Solmes would discourage any further applications to me in his favour.'

Although I was unable (through the fatigue I had undergone, and by reason of sitting up all night, to write to you, which made me lie longer than ordinary this morning) to deposit my letter to you sooner, yet I hope you will have it in such good time, as that you will be able to send me an answer to it this night, or in the morning early; which, if ever so short, will inform me, whether I may depend upon your mother's indulgence or not. This it behoves me to know as soon as possible; for they are resolved to hurry me away on Saturday next at farthest; perhaps to-morrow.

I will now inform you of all that has happened previous to their taking away my pen and ink, as well as of the manner in which that act of violence was committed; and this as briefly as I can.

My aunt, who (as well as Mr. Solmes, and my two uncles) lives here, I think, came up to me, and said, she would fain have me hear what Mr. Solmes had to

say of Mr. Lovelace—only that I may be apprized of some things, that would convince me what a vile man he is, and what a wretched husband he must make. I might give them what degree of credit I pleased ; and take them with abatement for Mr. Solmes's interestedness, if I thought fit. But it might be of use to me, were it but to question Mr. Lovelace indirectly upon some of them, that related to *myself*.

I was indifferent, I said, about what he could say of me ; as I was sure it could not be to my disadvantage ; and as *he* had no reason to impute to me the forwardness which my unkind friends had so causelessly taxed me with.

She said, That he gave himself high airs on account of his family ; and spoke as despicably of ours as if an alliance with *us* were beneath him.

I replied, That he was a very unworthy man, if it were true, to speak slightingly of a family, which was as good as his own, 'bating that it was not allied to the peerage : that the dignity itself, I thought, conveyed more shame than honour to descendants, who had not merit to adorn, as well as to be adorned by it : that my brother's absurd pride, indeed, which made him every where declare, he would never marry but to *quality*, gave a disgraceful preference against ours : but that were I to be assured, that Mr. Lovelace was capable of so mean a pride as to insult us or value himself on such an accidental advantage, I should think as despicably of his sense, as every body else did of his morals.

She insisted upon it, that he had taken such liberties ; and offered to give some instances, which, she said, would surprise me.

I answered, that were it ever so certain that Mr. Lovelace had taken such liberties, it would be but common justice (so much hated as he was by all our family, and so much inveighed against in all companies

by them) to inquire into the provocation he had to say what was imputed to him; and whether the value some of my friends put upon the riches they possess (throwing perhaps contempt upon every other advantage, and even discrediting *their own* pretensions to family, in order to depreciate *his*) might not provoke him to like contempts. Upon the whole, Madam, said I, can you say, that the inveteracy lies not as much on *our* side, as on *his?* Can *he* say any thing of *us* more disrespectful than *we* say of *him?*—And as to the suggestion, so often repeated, that he will make a bad husband, Is it possible for him to use a wife worse than I am used; particularly by my brother and sister?

Ah, Niece! Ah, my dear! how firmly has this wicked man attached you!

Perhaps not, Madam. But really great care should be taken by fathers and mothers, when they would have their daughters of *their* minds in these particulars, not to say things that shall necessitate the child, in honour and generosity, to take part with the man her friends are averse to. But, waving all this, as I have offered to renounce him for ever, I see not why he should be mentioned to me, nor why I should be wished to hear any thing about him.

Well, but still, my dear, there can be no harm to let Mr. Solmes tell you what Mr. Lovelace has said of *you*. Severely as you have treated Mr. Solmes, he is fond of attending you once more: he begs to be heard on this head.

If it be proper for me to hear it, Madam—

It *is*, eagerly interrupted she, very proper.

Has what he has said of *me*, Madam, convinced *you* of Mr. Lovelace's baseness?

It has, my dear: and that you ought to abhor him for it.

Then, dear Madam, be pleased to let me hear it from

your mouth: there is no need that I should see Mr. *Solmes*, when it will have double the weight from *you*. What, Madam, has the man dared to say of *me?*

My aunt was quite at a loss.

At last, Well, said she, I see how you are attached. I am sorry for it, Miss. For I do assure you, it will signify nothing. You must be Mrs. Solmes; and that in a very few days.

If consent of heart, and assent of voice, be necessary to a marriage, I am sure I never can, nor ever will, be married to Mr. Solmes. And what will any of my relations be answerable for, if they force my hand into his, and hold it there till the service be read; I perhaps insensible, and in fits, all the time!

What a romantic picture of a forced marriage have you drawn, Niece! Some people would say, you have given a fine description of your own obstinacy, child.

My brother and sister would: but you, Madam, distinguish, I am sure, between obstinacy and aversion.

Supposed aversion may owe its rise to *real* obstinacy, my dear.

I know my own heart, Madam. I wish *you* did.

Well, but see Mr. Solmes once more, Niece. It will oblige and make for you more than you imagine.

What should I see him for, Madam?—Is the man fond of hearing me declare my aversion to him?—Is he desirous of having me more and more incense my friends against myself?—*O my cunning, my ambitious, brother!*

Ah, my dear! with a look of pity, as if she understood the meaning of my exclamation—But must that necessarily be the case?

It must, Madam, if they will take offence at me for declaring my steadfast detestation of Mr. Solmes, as a husband.

Mr. Solmes is to be pitied, said she. He adores you. He longs to see you once more. He loves you

the better for your cruel usage of him yesterday. He is in raptures about you.

Ugly creature, thought I!—He in raptures!

What a cruel wretch must he be, said I, who can enjoy the distress to which he so largely contributes!—But I see, I see, Madam, that I am considered as an animal to be baited, to make sport for my brother and sister, and Mr. Solmes. They are all, all of them, wanton in their cruelty.—*I*, Madam, see the man! the man so incapable of pity!—Indeed I will not see him, if I can help it—indeed I will not.

What a construction does your lively wit put upon the admiration Mr. Solmes expresses of you!—Passionate as you were yesterday, and contemptuously as you treated him, he dotes upon you for the very severity by which he suffers. He is not so ungenerous a man as you think him: nor has he an unfeeling heart.—Let me prevail upon you, my dear, (as your *father* and *mother* expect it of you,) to see him once more, and hear what he has to say to you.

How can I consent to see him again, when yesterday's interview was interpreted by you, Madam, as well as by every other, as an encouragement to him? when I myself declared, that if I saw him a *second* time by my own consent, it might be so taken? and when I am determined never to encourage him?

You might spare your reflections upon *me*, Miss. I have no thanks either from one side or the other.

And away she flung.

Dearest Madam! said I, following her to the door—

But she would not hear me further; and her sudden breaking from me occasioned a hurry to some mean listener; as the slipping of a foot from the landing-place on the stairs discovered to me.

I had scarcely recovered myself from this attack,

when up came Betty—Miss, said she, your company is desired below-stairs in your own parlour.

By whom, Betty?

How can I tell, Miss?—perhaps by your sister, perhaps by your brother—I know they won't come up stairs to your apartment again.

Is Mr. Solmes gone, Betty?

I believe he is, Miss—Would you have him sent for back? said the bold creature.

Down I went: and to whom should I be sent for, but to my brother and Mr. Solmes! the latter standing sneaking behind the door, so that I saw him not, till I was mockingly led by the hand into the room by my brother. And then I started as if I had beheld a ghost.

You are to sit down, Clary.

And what then, Brother?

Why then, you are to put off that scornful look, and hear what Mr. Solmes has to say to you.

Sent for down to be baited again, thought I!

Madam, said Mr. Solmes, as if in haste to speak, lest he should not have an opportunity given him, [and indeed he judged right,] Mr. Lovelace is a declared *marriage hater*, and has a design upon your honour, if ever—

Base accuser! said I, in a passion, snatching my hand from my brother, who was insolently motioning to give it to Mr. Solmes; he has not!—he dares not! —But *you* have, if endeavouring to force a free mind be to dishonour it!

O thou violent creature! said my brother—but not gone yet—for I was rushing away.

What mean you, Sir, [struggling vehemently to get away,] to detain me thus against my will?

You shall not go, Violence; clasping his unbrotherly arms about me.

Then let not Mr. Solmes stay.—Why hold you me thus? he shall not for *your own* sake, if I can help it, see how barbarously a brother can treat a sister who deserves not evil treatment.

And I struggled so vehemently to get from him, that he was forced to quit my hand; which he did with these words—Begone then, Fury!—how strong is will!—there is no holding her.

And up I flew to my chamber, and locked myself in, trembling and out of breath.

In less than a quarter of an hour, up came Betty. I let her in upon her tapping, and asking (half out of breath too) for admittance.

The Lord have mercy upon us! said she.—What a *confusion of a house* is this! [hurrying up and down, fanning herself with her handkerchief,] Such angry masters and mistresses!—such an obstinate young lady!—such an humble lover!—such enraged uncles!—such—O dear!—dear! what a topsy-turvy house is this!—And all for what, trow?—only because a young lady *may* be happy, and will *not?*—only because a young lady *will* have a husband, and will *not* have a husband? What hurlyburlies are here, where all used to be peace and quietness!

Thus she ran on to herself; while I sat as patiently as I could (being assured that her errand was not designed to be a welcome one to me) to observe when her soliloquy would end.

At last, turning to me—I must do as I am bid. I can't help it—don't be angry with me, Miss. But I must carry down your pen and ink: and that this moment.

By whose order?

By your papa's and mamma's.

How shall I know that?

She offered to go to my closet: I stept in before her: touch it, if you dare.

Up came my cousin Dolly—Madam!—Madam! said the poor weeping, good-natured creature, in broken sentences—you must—indeed you must—deliver to Betty—or to me—your pen and ink.

Must I, my sweet Cousin? then I will to you; but not to this bold body. And so I gave my standish to her.

I am sorry, very sorry, said she, Miss, to be the messenger: but your papa will not have you in the same house with him: he is resolved you shall be carried away to-morrow, or Saturday at farthest. And therefore your pen and ink are taken away, that you may give nobody notice of it.

And away went the dear girl, very sorrowful, carrying down with her my standish, and all its furniture, and a little parcel of pens beside, which having been seen when the great search was made, she was bid to ask for.

As it happened, I had not diminished it, having hid half a dozen crow-quills in as many different places. It was lucky; for I doubt not they had numbered how many were in the parcel.

Betty ran on, telling me, that my mother was now as much incensed against me as any body—that my doom was fixed—that my violent behaviour had not left one to plead for me—that Mr. Solmes bit his lip, and muttered, and *seemed to have more in his head, than could come out at his mouth;* that was her phrase.

And yet she also hinted to me, that the cruel wretch took pleasure in seeing me; although so much to my disgust—and so wanted to see me again.—Must he not be a savage, my dear?

The wench went on—that my uncle Harlowe said, That now *he* gave me up—that he pitied Mr. Solmes—yet hoped he would not think of this to my detriment hereafter: that my uncle Antony was of opinion, that

I ought to smart for it: *and*, for *her* part—and then, as one of the family, she gave her opinion of the same side.

As I have no other way of hearing any thing that is said or intended below, I bear sometimes more patiently than I otherwise should do with her impertinence. And indeed she seems to be in all my brother's and sister's counsels.

Miss Hervey came up again, and demanded an half-pint ink-bottle which they had seen in my closet.

I gave it her without hesitation.

If they have no suspicion of my being able to write, they will perhaps let me stay longer than otherwise they would.

This, my dear, is now my situation.

All my dependence, all my hopes, are in your mother's favour. But for that, I know not *what* I might do: For who can tell what will come next?

LETTER XXXVI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Wednesday, Four o'clock in the Afternoon.

I AM just returned from depositing the letter I so lately finished, and such of Mr. Lovelace's letters as I had not sent you. My long letter I found remaining there—so you will have both together.

I am concerned, methinks, it is not with you.—But your servant cannot always be at leisure. However, I will deposit as fast as I write. I must keep nothing by me now; and when I write, lock myself in, that I may not be surprised now they think I have no pen and ink.

I found in the usual place another letter from this diligent man: and, by its contents, a confirmation that nothing passes in this house but he knows it; and that almost as soon as it passes. For this letter must have been written before he could have received my billet; and deposited, I suppose, when that was taken away; yet he compliments me in it upon asserting myself (as he calls it) on that occasion to my uncle and to Mr. Solmes.

'He assures me, however, that they are more and more determined to subdue me.

'He sends me the compliments of his family; and acquaints me with their earnest desire to see me amongst them. Most vehemently does he press for my quitting this house, while it is in my power to get away: and again craves leave to order his uncle's chariot-and-six to attend my commands at the stile leading to the coppice adjoining to the paddock.

'Settlements to my own will he again offers. Lord M. and Lady Sarah and Lady Betty to be guarantees of his honour and justice. But, if I choose not to go to either of those ladies, nor yet to make him the happiest of men so soon as it is nevertheless his hope that I will, he urges me to withdraw to my own house, and to accept of my Lord M. for my guardian and protector till my cousin Morden arrives. He can contrive, he says, to give me easy possession of it, and will fill it with his female relations on the first invitation from me; and Mrs. Norton, or Miss Howe, may be undoubtedly prevailed upon to be with me for a time. There can be no pretence for litigation, he says, when I am once in it. Nor, if I choose to have it so, will he appear to visit me; nor presume to mention marriage to me till all is quiet and easy; till every method I shall prescribe for a reconciliation with my friends is tried; till my cousin comes; till such settlements are

drawn as he shall approve of for me; and that I have unexceptionable proofs of his own good behaviour.'

As to the disgrace a person of my character may be apprehensive of upon quitting my father's house, he observes (too truly I doubt) 'That the treatment I meet with is in every one's mouth: yet, he says, that the public voice is in my favour. My friends themselves, he says, *expect* that I will do myself what he calls, this justice: why else do they confine me? He urges, that, thus treated, the independence I have a right to will be my sufficient excuse, going but from their house to my own, if I choose that measure; or in order to take possession of my own, if I do not: that all the disgrace I *can* receive, they have already given me: that his concern and his family's concern in my honour, will be equal to my own, if he may be so happy ever to call me his: and he presumes, he says, to aver, that no family can better supply the loss of my own friends to me than his, in whatever way I shall do them the honour to accept of his and their protection.

'But he repeats, that, in all events, he will oppose my being carried to my uncle's; being well assured, that I shall be lost to him for ever, if once I enter into that house.' He tells me, 'That my brother and sister, and Mr. Solmes, design to be there to receive me: that my father and mother will not come near me till the ceremony is actually over: and that then they will appear, in order to try to reconcile me to my odious husband, by urging upon me the obligations I shall be supposed to be under from a double duty.'

How, my dear, am I driven on one side, and invited on the other!—This last intimation is but a too probable one. All the steps they take seem to tend to this! And, indeed, they have declared almost as much.

He owns, 'That he has already taken his measures upon this intelligence:—but that he is *so* desirous for

my sake (I must *suppose*, he says, that he owes *them* no forbearance *for their own*) to avoid coming to extremities, that he has suffered a person, whom they do not suspect, to acquaint them with his resolutions, as if come at by accident, if they persist in their design to carry me by violence to my uncle's; in hopes, that they may be induced from the fear of mischief which may ensue, to *change* their measures: and yet he is aware, that he has exposed himself to the greatest risques by having caused this intimation to be given them; since, if he cannot benefit himself by their fears, there is no doubt but they will doubly guard themselves against him upon it.'

What a dangerous enterpriser, however, is this man!

'He begs a few lines from me by way of answer to this letter, either this evening, or to-morrow morning. If he be not so favoured, he shall conclude, from what he knows of the fixed determination of my relations, that I shall be under a closer restraint than before: and he shall be obliged to take his measures according to that presumption.'

You will see by this abstract, as well as by his letter preceding this, (for both run in the same strain,) how strangely forward the difficulty of my situation has brought him in his declarations and proposals; and in his threatenings too: which, but for that, I would not take from him.

Something, however, I must speedily resolve upon, or it will be out of my power to help myself.

Now I think of it, I will enclose his letter, (so might have spared the abstract of it,) that you may the better judge of all his proposals, and intelligence; and lest it should fall into other hands. I cannot forget the contents, although I am at a loss what answer to return.*

* She accordingly encloses Mr. Lovelace's letter. But as

I cannot bear the thoughts of throwing myself upon the protection of his friends:—but I will not examine his proposals closely till I hear from you. Indeed, I have no *eligible* hope, but in your mother's goodness. *Hers* is a protection I could more *reputably* fly to, than to that of any other person: and from hers should be ready to return to my father's (for the breach then would not be irreparable, as it would be, if I fled to his family): to *return*, I repeat, on such terms as shall secure but my *negative;* not my *independence:* I do not aim at that (so shall lay your mother under the less difficulty); though I have a right to be put into possession of my grandfather's estate, if I were to insist upon it:—such a right, I mean, as my brother exerts in the estate left *him;* and which nobody disputes.—God forbid, that I should ever think myself freed from my father's *reasonable* controul, whatever right my grandfather's will has given me! He, good gentleman, left me that estate, as a reward of my duty, and not to set me above it, as has been justly hinted to me: and this reflection makes me more fearful of not answering the intention of so valuable a bequest.—Oh! that my friends knew but my heart!—Would but think of it as they used to do!—For once more, I say, If it deceive me not, it is not altered, although theirs are!

Would but your mother permit you to send her chariot, or chaise, to the bye-place where Mr. Lovelace proposes Lord M.'s shall come, (provoked, intimidated, and apprehensive, as I am,) I would not hesitate a moment what to do. Place me any where, as I have said before—in a cot, in a garret; any where—disguised as a servant—or let me pass as a servant's sister—so that I may but escape Mr. Solmes on one hand,

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the most material contents of it are given in her abstract, it is omitted.

and the disgrace of refuging with the family of a man at enmity with my own, on the other; and I shall be in some measure happy!—Should your good mother refuse me, what refuge, or whose, can I fly to?—Dearest creature, advise your distressed friend.

I broke off here—I was so excessively uneasy, that I durst not trust myself with my own reflections. I therefore went down to the garden, to try to calm my mind, by shifting the scene. I took but one turn upon the filbert-walk, when Betty came to me. Here, Miss, is your papa—here is your uncle Antony—here is my young master—and my young mistress, coming to take a walk in the garden; and your papa sends me to see where you are, for fear he should meet you.

I struck into an oblique path, and got behind the yew-hedge, seeing my sister appear; and there concealed myself till they were gone past me.

My mother, it seems is not well. My poor mother keeps her chamber—should she be worse, I should have an additional unhappiness, in apprehension that my reputed undutifulness had touched her heart.

You cannot imagine what my emotions were behind the yew-hedge, on seeing my father so near me. I was glad to look at him through the hedge as he passed by: but I trembled in every joint, when I heard him utter *these* words: Son James, to you, and to Bella, and to you, Brother, do I wholly commit this matter. That I was meant, I cannot doubt. And yet, why was I so affected; since I may be said to have been given up to the cruelty of my brother and sister for many days past?

While my father remained in the garden, I sent my

dutiful compliments to my mother, with inquiry after her health, by Shorey, whom I met accidentally upon the stairs; for none of the servants, except my goaleress, dare to throw themselves in my way. I had the mortification of such a return, as made me repent my message, though not my concern for her health. 'Let her not inquire after the disorders she occasions,' was her harsh answer. 'I will not receive any compliments from her.'

Very, *very* hard, my dear! Indeed it is very hard.

I have the pleasure to hear that my mother is already better. A colicky disorder, to which she is too subject. It is hoped it is gone off—God send it may!—Every evil that happens in this house is owing to me!

This good news was told me, with a circumstance very unacceptable; for Betty said, she had orders to let me know, that my garden-walks and poultry-visits were suspected; and that both will be prohibited, if I stay here till Saturday or Monday.

Possibly this is said by order, to make me go with less reluctance to my uncle's.

My mother bid her say, if I expostulated about these orders, and about my pen and ink, 'that reading was more to the purpose, at present, than writing: that by the one, I might be taught my duty; that the other, considering whom I was believed to write to, only stiffened my will: that my needle-works had better be pursued than my airings; which were observed to be taken in all weathers.'

So, my dear, if I do not resolve upon something soon, I shall neither be able to avoid the intended evil, nor have it in my power to correspond with you.

Wednesday Night.

All is in a hurry below-stairs. Betty is in and out like a spy. Something is working, I know not what. I am really a good deal disordered in body as well as mind. Indeed I am quite heart-sick.

I will go down, though 'tis almost dark, on pretence of getting a little air and composure. Robert has my two former, I hope, before now: and I will deposit this, with Lovelace's enclosed, if I can, for fear of another search.

I know not what I shall do!—All is so strangely busy!—Doors clapt to—going out of one apartment, hurryingly, as I may say, into another. Betty in her alarming way, staring, as if of frighted importance; twice with me in half an hour; called down in haste by Shorey the last time; leaving me with still *more* meaning in her looks and gestures—yet possibly nothing in all this worthy of my apprehensions—

Here again comes the creature, with her deep-drawn affected sighs, and her *O dear's! O dear's!*

More dark hints thrown out by the saucy creature. But she will not explain herself. 'Suppose this pretty business ends in murder! she says. I may rue my opposition as long as I live, for aught she knows. Parents will not be *baffled* out of their children by impudent gentlemen; nor is it fit they should. It may come home to me when I least expect it.'

These are the gloomy and perplexing hints this impertinent throws out. Probably they arise from the information Mr. Lovelace says he has secretly permitted them to have (from this vile double-faced agent, I suppose!) of his resolution to prevent my being carried to my uncle's.

How *justly*, if so, may this exasperate them!—How

am I driven to and fro, like a feather in the wind, at the pleasure of the rash, the selfish, and the headstrong! and when I am as averse to the proceedings of the one, as I am to those of the other! For although I was induced to carry on this unhappy correspondence, as I think I ought to call it, in hopes to prevent mischief; yet indiscreet measures are fallen upon by the rash man, before I, who am so much concerned in the event of the present contentions, can be consulted: and between his violence on one hand, and that of my relations on the other, I find myself in danger from both.

O my dear! what is worldly wisdom but the height of folly!—I, the meanest, at least the youngest, of my father's family, to thrust myself in the gap between such uncontroulable spirits!—To the intercepting perhaps of the designs of Providence, which may intend to make those hostile spirits their own punishers.—If so, what presumption!—Indeed, my dear friend, I am afraid I have thought myself of too much consequence. But, however this be, *it is good, when calamities befal us, that we should look into ourselves, and fear.*

If I am prevented depositing this and the enclosed, (as I intend to try to do, late as it is,) I will add to it as occasion shall offer. Mean time, believe me to be

Your ever-affectionate and grateful
Cl. Harlowe.

Under the superscription, written with a pencil, after she went down.

'My two former are not yet taken away—I am surprised—I hope you are well—I hope all is right betwixt your mother and you.'

LETTER XXXVII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Thursday Morning, April 9.

I HAVE your three letters. Never was there a creature more impatient on the most interesting uncertainty than I was, to know the event of the interview between you and Solmes.

It behoves me to account to my dear friend, in her present unhappy situation, for every thing that may have the least appearance of negligence or remissness on my part. I sent Robin in the morning early, in hopes of a deposit. He loitered about the place till near ten to no purpose; and then came away; my mother having given him a letter to carry to Mr. Hunt's, which he was to deliver before three, when only, in the day-time, that gentleman is at home; and to bring her back an answer to it. Mr. Hunt's house, you know, lies wide from Harlowe-place. Robin but just saved his time; and returned not till it was too late to send him again. I could only direct him to set out before day this morning; and if he got any letter, to ride as for his life to bring it to me.

I lay by myself: a most uneasy night I had through impatience; and being discomposed with it, lay longer than usual. Just as I was risen, in came Kitty, from Robin, with your three letters. I was not a quarter dressed; and only slipt on my morning sack; proceeding no further till I had read them all through, long as they are: and yet I often stopped to rave aloud (though by myself) at the devilish people you have to deal with.

How my heart rises at them all! How poorly did they design to trick you into an encouragement of

Solmes, from the extorted interview!—I am very, very angry at your aunt Hervey—to give up her own judgment so tamely!—and, not content to do so, to become such an *active* instrument in their hands!—But it is so like the world!—so like my mother too!—Next to her own child, there is not any body living she values so much as she does you:—Yet it is—Why should we embroil ourselves, Nancy, with the affairs of other people?

Other people!—How I hate the poor words, where friendship is concerned, and where the protection to be given may be of so much consequence to a friend, and of so little detriment to one's self!

I am delighted with your spirit, however. I expected it not from you. Nor did they, I am sure. Nor would *you*, perhaps, have exerted it, if Lovelace's intelligence of Solmes's nursery-offices had not set you up. I wonder not that the wretch is said to love you the better for it. What an honour would it be to him to have such a wife? And he can be even with you when you are so. He must indeed be a savage, as you say.—Yet he is less to blame for his perseverance, than those of your own family, whom most you reverence for theirs.

It is well, as I have often said, that I have not such provocations and trials; I should perhaps long ago have taken your cousin Dolly's advice—yet dare I not to touch that key.—I shall always love the good girl for her tenderness to you.

I know not what to say to Lovelace; nor what to think of his promises, nor of his proposals to you. 'Tis certain that you are highly esteemed by all his family. The ladies are persons of unblemished honour. My Lord M. is also (as men and peers go) a man of honour. I could tell what to advise any other person in the world to do but you. So much expected from

you!—Such a shining light!—Your quitting your father's house, and throwing yourself into the protection of a family, however honourable, that has a man in it, whose person, parts, declarations, and pretensions, will be thought to have engaged your warmest esteem; —methinks I am rather for advising that you should get privately to London; and not to let either him, or any body else but me, know where you are, till your cousin Morden comes.

As to going to your uncle's, that you must not do, if you can help it. Nor must you have Solmes, that's certain: Not only because of his unworthiness in every respect, but because of the aversion you have so openly avowed to him; which every body knows and talks of; as they do of your approbation of the other. For your reputation sake therefore, as well as to prevent mischief, you must either live single, or have Lovelace.

If you think of going to London, let me know; and I hope you will have *time* to allow me a further concert as to the manner of your getting away, and thither, and how to procure proper lodgings for you.

To obtain this *time*, you must palliate a little, and come into some seeming compromise, if you cannot do otherwise. Driven as you are driven, it will be strange if you are not obliged to part with a few of your admirable punctilio's.

You will observe from what I have written, that I have not succeeded with my mother.

I am extremely mortified and disappointed. We have had very strong debates upon it. But, besides the narrow argument of *embroiling ourselves with other people's affairs*, as above-mentioned, she will have it, that it is your duty to comply. She says, she was *always* of opinion that daughters should implicitly submit to the will of their parents in the great article of marriage; and that she governed herself accordingly in

marrying my father; who at first was more the choice of her parents than her own.

This is what she argues in behalf of her favourite Hickman, as well as for Solmes in your case.

I must not doubt, but my mother always governed herself by this principle—because she *says* she did. I have likewise another reason to believe it; which you shall have, though it may not become me to give it—that they did not live so happily together, as one would hope people might do who married preferring each other at the time to the rest of the world.

Somebody shall fare never the better for this double-meant policy of my mother, I do assure you. Such a retrospection in her arguments to him, and to his address, it is but fit that *he* should suffer for *my* mortification in failing to carry a point upon which I had set my whole heart.

Think, my dear, if in any way I can serve you. If you allow of it, I protest I will go off privately with you, and we will live and die together. Think of it. Improve upon my hint, and command me.

A little interruption.—What is breakfast to the subject I am upon?

London, I am told, is the best hiding-place in the world. I have written nothing but what I will stand to at the word of command. Women love to engage in knight-errantry, now-and-then, as well as to encourage it in the men. But in your case, what I propose will not seem to have any thing of that nature in it. It will enable me to perform what is no more than a duty in serving and comforting a dear and worthy friend, who labours under undeserved oppression: and you will *ennoble*, as I may say, your Anna Howe, if you allow her to be your companion in affliction.

I will engage, my dear, we shall not be in town together one month, before we surmount all difficulties; and this without being beholden to any men-fellows for their protection.

I must repeat what I have often said, that the authors of your persecutions would not have presumed to set on foot their selfish schemes against you, had they not depended upon the gentleness of your spirit; though now, having gone so far, and having engaged *Old* AUTHORITY in it, [chide me if you will!] neither *he* nor *they* know how to recede.

When they find you out of their reach, and know that I am with you, you'll see how they'll pull in their odious horns.

I think, however, that you should have written to your cousin Morden, the moment they had begun to treat you disgracefully.

I shall be impatient to hear whether they will attempt to carry you to your uncle's. I remember, that Lord M.'s dismissed bailiff reported of Lovelace, that he had six or seven companions as bad as himself; and that the country was always glad when they left it.* He actually *has*, as I hear, such a knot of them about him now. And, depend upon it, he will not suffer them quietly to carry you to your uncle's: And whose must you be, if he succeeds in taking you from them?

I tremble for you but upon *supposing* what may be the consequence of a conflict upon this occasion. Lovelace owes some of them vengeance. This gives me a double concern, that my mother should refuse her consent to the protection I had set my heart upon procuring for you.

My mother will not breakfast without me. A

* See Vol. I. Letter IV.

quarrel has its conveniencies sometimes. Yet too much love, I think, is as bad as too little.

We have just now had another pull. Upon my word, she is *excessively*—what shall I say?—*unpersuadable*—I must let her off with that soft word.

Who was the old Greek, that said, *he* governed Athens; his *wife*, him; and his *son*, her?

It was not my mother's fault [I am writing to *you*, you know] that she did not govern my *father*. But I am but a *daughter!*—Yet I thought I was not quite so powerless when I was set upon carrying a point, as I find myself to be.

Adieu, my dear!—Happier times must come—and that quickly too.—The strings cannot long continue thus overstrained. They must break or be relaxed. In either way, the certainty must be preferable to the suspense.

One word more:

I think in my conscience you must take one of these two alternatives; either to consent to let us go to London together privately; [in which case, I will procure a vehicle, and meet you at your appointment at the stile to which Lovelace proposes to bring his uncle's chariot;] or, to put yourself into the protection of Lord M. and the ladies of his family.

You have another, indeed; and that is, if you are absolutely resolved against Solmes, to meet and marry Lovelace directly.

Whichsoever of these you make choice of, you will have this plea, both to yourself, and to the world, that you are concluded by the same uniform principle that has governed your whole conduct, ever since the contention between Lovelace and your brother has been on

foot: that is to say, that you have chosen a lesser evil, in hopes to prevent a greater.

Adieu! and Heaven direct for the best my beloved creature, prays

Her
ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXXVIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Thursday, April 6.

I THANK you, my dearest friend, for the pains you have taken in accounting so affectionately for my papers not being taken away yesterday; and for the kind protection you would have procured for me, if you could.

This kind protection was what I wished for: but my wishes, raised at first by your love, were rather governed by my despair of other refuge [having before cast about, and not being able to determine, what I *ought* to do, and what I *could* do, in a situation so unhappy] than by a reasonable hope: For why indeed should any body embroil themselves for others, when they can avoid it?

All my consolation is, as I have frequently said, that I have not, by my own inadvertence or folly, brought myself into this sad situation. If I *had*, I should not have dared to look up to any body with the expectation of protection or assistance, nor to you for excuse of the trouble I give you. But nevertheless we should not be angry at a person's not doing that for ourselves, or for our friend, which she thinks she ought *not* to do; and which she has it in her option either to *do*, or to *let it alone*. Much less have you a right to be displeased with so prudent a mother, for not engaging

herself so warmly in my favour, as you wished she would. If my own aunt can give me up, and that against her judgment, as I may presume to say; and if my father and mother, and uncles, who once loved me so well, can join so strenuously against me; can *I* expect, or ought *you*, the protection of your mother, in *opposition* to them?

Indeed, my dear love, [permit me to be *very* serious,] I am afraid I am singled out (either for my own faults, or for the faults of my family, or perhaps for the faults of both) to be a very unhappy creature! —*signally* unhappy! For see you not how irresistible the waves of affliction come tumbling down upon me?

We have been till within these few weeks, every one of us, too happy. No crosses, no vexations, but what we gave ourselves from the *pamperedness*, as I may call it, of our own wills. Surrounded by our heaps and stores, hoarded up as fast as acquired, we have seemed to think ourselves out of the reach of the bolts of adverse fate. I was the pride of all my friends, proud *myself* of *their* pride, and glorying in my standing. Who knows what the justice of Heaven may inflict, in order to convince us, that we are not out of the reach of misfortune; and to reduce us to a better reliance, than what we have hitherto presumptuously made?

I should have been very little the better for the *conversation-visits* which the good Dr. Lewen used to honour me with, and for the principles *wrought* (as I may say) into my earliest mind by my pious Mrs. Norton, founded on her reverend father's experience, as well as on her own, if I could not thus retrospect and argue, in such a strange situation as we are in. *Strange*, I may well call it; for don't you see, my dear, that we seem all to be *impelled*, as it were, by a perverse fate, which none of us are able to resist?—

and yet all arising (with a strong appearance of self-punishment) from ourselves? Do not my parents see the hopeful children, from whom they expected a perpetuity of worldly happiness to their branching family, now grown up to answer the *till* now distant hope, setting their angry faces against each other, pulling up by the roots, as I may say, that hope which was ready to be carried into a probable certainty?

Your partial love will be ready to acquit me of *capital* and *intentional* faults:—but oh, my dear! my calamities have humbled me enough to make me turn my gaudy eye inward; to make me look into myself. —And what have I discovered there?—Why, my dear friend, more *secret* pride and vanity than I could have thought had lain in my unexamined heart.

If *I* am to be singled out to be the *punisher* of myself and family, who so lately was the *pride* of it, pray for me, my dear, that I may not be left wholly to myself; and that I may be enabled to support my character, so as to be *justly* acquitted of wilful and premeditated faults. The will of Providence be resigned to in the rest: as *that* leads, let me patiently and unrepiningly follow!—I shall not live always!—May but my *closing* scene be happy!

But I will not oppress you, my dearest friend, with further reflections of this sort. I will take them all into myself. Surely I have a mind that has room for them. My afflictions are too sharp to last long. The crisis is at hand. Happier times you bid me hope for. I *will* hope.

But yet, I cannot but be impatient at times, to find myself thus driven, and my character so depreciated and sunk, that were all the *future* to be happy, I should be ashamed to shew my face in public, or to

look up. And all by the instigation of a selfish brother, and envious sister.—

But let me stop: let me reflect!—Are not these suggestions the suggestions of the *secret* pride I have been censuring? Then, *already* so impatient! but this moment so resigned, so much better disposed for reflection! yet 'tis hard, 'tis *very* hard, to subdue an embittered spirit!—in the instant of its trial too!—O my cruel brother!—but now it rises again.—I will lay down a pen I am so little able to govern.—And I will try to subdue an impatience, which (if my afflictions are sent me for corrective ends) may otherwise lead me into still more punishable errors.—

I will return to a subject, which I cannot fly from for ten minutes together—called upon especially, as I am, by your three alternatives stated in the conclusion of your last.

As to the first; to wit, *your advice for me to escape to London*—let me tell you, that the other hint or proposal which accompanies it perfectly frightens me—surely, my dear, (happy as you are, and indulgently treated as your mother treats you,) you cannot mean what you propose! What a wretch must I be, if, for *one* moment only, I could lend an ear to such a proposal as this!—*I*, to be the occasion of making such a mother's (perhaps *shortened*) life unhappy to the last hour of it!—*Ennoble* you, my dear creature! How must such an enterprise (the rashness *public*, the motives, were they excusable, *private*) debase you!—but I will not dwell upon the subject—for your *own* sake I will not.

As to your second alternative, *to put myself into the protection of Lord M. and of the ladies of that family*, I own to you, (as I believe I have owned before,)

that although to do this would be the same thing in the eye of the world as putting myself into Mr. Lovelace's protection, yet I think I would do it rather than be Mr. Solmes's wife, if there were evidently no other way to avoid being so.

Mr. Lovelace, you have seen, proposes to contrive a way to put me into possession of my own house; and he tells me, that he will soon fill it with the ladies of his family, as my visiters;—upon my invitation, however, to them. A very inconsiderate proposal I think it to be, and upon which I cannot explain myself to him. What an exertion of independency does it chalk out for me! How, were I to attend to *him*, (and not to the natural consequences to which the following of his advice would lead me,) might I be drawn by *gentle* words into the perpetration of the most *violent* acts!—For how could I gain possession, but either by legal litigation, which, were I *inclined* to have recourse to it, (as I never can be,) must take up time; or by forcibly turning out the persons whom my father has placed there, to look after the gardens, the house, and the furniture—persons entirely attached to himself, and who, as I know, have been lately instructed by my brother?

Your third alternative, *to meet and marry Mr. Lovelace directly;* a man with whose morals I am far from being satisfied—a step, that could not be taken with the least hope of ever obtaining pardon from or reconciliation with any of my friends; and against which a thousand objections rise in my mind—*that* is not to be thought of.

What appears to me, upon the fullest deliberation, the most eligible, if I *must* be thus driven, is the escaping to London. But I would forfeit all my hopes of happiness in this life, rather than you should go away with me, as you rashly, though with the

kindest intention, propose. If I could get safely thither, and be private, methinks I might remain absolutely independent of Mr. Lovelace, and at liberty either to make proposals to my friends, or, should they renounce me, (and I had no other or better way,) to make terms with him; supposing my cousin Morden, on his arrival, were to join with my other relations. But they would *then* perhaps indulge me in my choice of a single life, on giving him up: the renewing to them this offer, when at my own liberty, will at least convince them, that I was in earnest when I made it first: and, upon my word, I *would* stand to it, dear as you seem to think, when you are disposed to rally me, it would cost me, *to* stand to it.

If, my dear, you can procure a vehicle for us *both*, you can perhaps procure one for me *singly:* but can it be done without embroiling *yourself* with your mother, or *her* with our family?—Be it coach, chariot, chaise, waggon, or horse, I matter not, provided you appear not to have a hand in my withdrawing. Only, in case it be one of the two latter, I believe I must desire you to get me an ordinary gown and coat, or habit, of some servant; having no concert with any of our own: the more ordinary the better. They must be thrust into the wood-house; where I can put them on; and then slide down from the bank, that separates the wood-yard from the green lane.

But, alas! my dear, this, even *this* alternative, is not without difficulties, which, to a spirit so little enterprising as mine, seem in a manner insuperable. These are my reflections upon it.

I am afraid, in the first place, that I shall not have time for the requisite preparations for an escape.

Should I be either detected in those preparations, or pursued and overtaken in my flight, and so brought back, then would they think themselves doubly war-

ranted to compel me to have their Solmes: and, conscious of an intended fault, perhaps, I should be the less able to contend with them.

But were I even to get safely to London, I know nobody there but by name; and those the tradesmen to our family; who, no doubt, would be the first written to and engaged to find me out. And should Mr. Lovelace discover where I was, and he and my brother meet, what mischiefs might ensue between them, whether I were willing or not to return to Harlowe-place!

But supposing I could remain there concealed, to what might not my youth, my sex, and unacquaintedness of the ways of that great, wicked town, expose me!—I should hardly dare to go to church for fear of being discovered. People would wonder how I lived. Who knows but I might pass for a kept mistress; and that, although nobody came to me, yet, that every time I went out, it might be imagined to be in pursuance of some assignation?

You, my dear, who alone would know where to direct to me, would be watched in all your steps, and in all your messages; and your mother, at present not highly pleased with our correspondence, would then have reason to be *more* displeased: And might not differences follow between her and you, that would make me very unhappy, were I to know them? And this the more likely, as you take it so unaccountably (and, give me leave to say, so ungenerously) into your head, to revenge yourself upon the innocent Mr. Hickman, for all the displeasure your mother gives you.

Were Lovelace to find out my place of abode, that would be the same thing in the eye of the world as if I had actually gone off with him: For would he, do you think, be prevailed upon to forbear visiting me?

And then his unhappy character (a foolish man!) would be no credit to any young creature desirous of concealment. Indeed the world, let me escape whither, and to whomsoever I could, would conclude *him* to be the contriver of it.

These are the difficulties which arise to me on revolving this scheme; which, nevertheless, might appear surmountable to a more enterprising spirit in my circumstances. If you, my dear, think them surmountable in any one of the cases put, [and to be sure I can take no course, but what must have *some* difficulty in it,] be pleased to let me know your free and full thoughts upon it.

Had *you*, my dear friend, been married, then should I have had no doubt but that you and Mr. Hickman would have afforded an asylum to a poor creature more than half lost in her own apprehension for want of one kind protecting friend!

You say I should have written to my cousin Morden the moment I was treated disgracefully: But could I have believed that my friends would not have softened by degrees when they saw my antipathy to their Solmes?

I had thoughts indeed several times of writing to my cousin: but by the time an answer could have come, I imagined all would have been over, as if it had never been: so from day to day, from week to week, I hoped on: and, after all, I might as reasonably fear (as I have heretofore said) that my cousin would be brought to side against me, as that some of those I have named would.

And then to appeal to a *cousin* [I must have written with *warmth* to engage him] against a *father;* this was not a desirable thing to set about. Then I had not, you know, one soul on my side; my mother herself against me. To be sure my cousin would have

suspended his judgment till he could have arrived. He might not have been in haste to come, hoping the malady would cure itself: but *had* he written, his letters probably would have run in the qualifying style; to persuade *me* to submit, or *them* only to relax. Had his letters been more on *my* side than on *theirs*, they would not have regarded them: nor perhaps *himself*, had he come and been an advocate for me: for you see how strangely determined they are; how they have over-awed or got in everybody; so that no one dare open their lips in my behalf. And you have heard that my brother pushes his measures with the more violence, that all may be over with me before my cousin's expected arrival.

But you tell me, that, in order to gain time, I must *palliate;* that I must seem to compromise with my friends: But how *palliate?* How *seem* to compromise? You would not have me endeavour to make them believe, that I will consent to what I never intended to consent to! You would not have me to gain time, with a view to *deceive!*

To *do evil, that good may come of it*, is forbidden: And shall I do evil, yet know not whether good may come of it or not?

Forbid it, heaven! that Clarissa Harlowe should have it in her thought to *serve*, or even to *save* herself at the expense of her sincerity, and by a *studied* deceit!

And is there, after all, no way to escape one great evil, but by plunging myself into another?—What an ill-fated creature am I!—Pray for me, my dearest Nancy!—my mind is at present so much disturbed, that I can hardly pray for myself.

LETTER XXXIX

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Thursday Night.

The alarming hurry I mentioned under my date of last night, and Betty's saucy dark hints, come out to be owing to what I guessed they were; that is to say, to the private intimation Mr. Lovelace contrived our family should have of his insolent resolution [*insolent* I must call it] to prevent my being carried to my uncle's.

I saw at that time that it was as *wrong* with respect to answering his own view, as it was *insolent:* For, could he think, as Betty (I suppose from her betters) justly observed, that parents would be insulted out of their right to dispose of their own child, by a violent man, whom they hate; and who could have no pretension to dispute that right with them, unless what he had from *her* who had none over herself? And how must this insolence of his, aggravated as my brother is able to aggravate it, exasperate them against me?

The rash man has indeed so far gained his point, as to intimidate them from attempting to carry me away: but he has put them upon a surer and a more desperate measure: and this has driven me also into one *as* desperate; the consequence of which, although he could not foresee it,* may perhaps too well answer his great end, little as he deserves to have it answered.

* She was mistaken in this. Mr. Lovelace *did* foresee this consequence. All his contrivances led to it, and the whole family, as he boasts, unknown to themselves, were but so many puppets danced by his wires. See Vol. I Letter XXXI.

In short, I have done, as far as I know, the most rash thing that ever I did in my life.

But let me give you the motive, and then the action will follow of course.

About six o'clock this evening, my aunt (who stays here all night, on my account, no doubt) came up and tapped at my door; for I was writing; and had locked myself in. I opened it; and she entering, thus delivered herself:

I come once more to visit you, my dear; but sorely against my will; because it is to impart to you matters of the utmost concern to you, and to the whole family.

What, Madam, is now to be done with me? said I, wholly attentive.

You will not be hurried away to your uncle's, child; let that comfort you.—They see your aversion to go.—You will not be obliged to go to your uncle Antony's.

How you revive me, Madam! this is a cordial to my heart!

I little thought, my dear, what was to follow this supposed condescension.

And then I ran over with blessings for this good news, (and she permitted me so to do, by her silence); congratulating myself, that I *thought* my father could not resolve to carry things to the last extremity.—

Hold, Niece, said she, at last—you must not give yourself too much joy upon the occasion neither.—Don't be surprised, my dear.—Why look you upon me, child, with so affecting an earnestness?—but you must be Mrs. Solmes, for all that.

I was dumb.

She then told me, that they had had undoubted information, that a certain desperate *ruffian* (I must excuse her that word, she said) had prepared armed men to way-lay my brother and uncles, and seize me,

and carry me off.—Surely, she said, I was not consenting to a violence that might be followed by murder on one side or the other; perhaps on both.

I was still silent.

That therefore my father (still more exasperated than before) had changed his resolution as to my going to my uncle's; and was determined next Tuesday to set out thither *himself* with my mother; and that (for it was to no purpose to conceal a resolution so soon to be put in execution)—I must not dispute it any longer—on Wednesday I must give my hand—as they would have me.

She proceeded, that orders were already given for a license: that the ceremony was to be performed in my own chamber, in presence of all my friends, except of my father and mother; who would not return, nor see me, till all was over, and till they had a good account of my behaviour.

The very intelligence, my dear!—the very intelligence this, which Lovelace gave me!

I was still dumb—only sighing, as if my heart would break.

She went on, comforting me, as she thought. 'She laid before me the merit of obedience; and told me, that if it were my desire that my Norton should be present at the ceremony, it would be complied with: that the pleasure I should receive from reconciling all my friends to me, and in their congratulations upon it, must needs overbalance, with such a one as me, the difference of persons, however preferable I might think the one man to the other: that love was a fleeting thing, little better than a name, where morality and virtue did not distinguish the object of it: that a choice made by its dictates was seldom happy; at least not *durably* so: nor was it to be wondered at, when it naturally exalted the object above its merits,

and made the lover blind to faults, that were visible to every body else: so that when a nearer intimacy stript it of its imaginary perfections, it left frequently both parties surprised, that they could be so grossly cheated; and that then the indifference became stronger than the love ever was. That a woman gave a man great advantages, and inspired him with great vanity, when she avowed her love for him, and preference of him; and was generally requited with insolence and contempt: whereas the confessedly-obliged man, it was probable, would be all reverence and gratitude'— and I cannot tell what.

'You, my dear, said she, believe you shall be unhappy, if you have Mr. Solmes: your parents think the contrary; and that you will be undoubtedly so, were you to have Mr. Lovelace, whose morals are unquestionably bad: suppose it were your sad lot to be unhappy with either, let me beseech you to consider, what great consolation you will have on one hand, if you pursue your parents' advice, that you did so; what mortification on the other, that by following your own, you have nobody to blame but yourself.'

This, you remember, my dear, was an argument enforced upon me by Mrs. Norton.

These and other observations which she made were worthy of my aunt Hervey's good sense and experience, and applied to almost any young creature who stood in opposition to her parents' will, but one who had offered to make the sacrifices I have offered to make, ought to have had their due weight. But although it was easy to answer some of them in my own particular case; yet having over and over, to my mother, *before* my confinement, and to my brother and sister, and even to my aunt Hervey, *since*, said what I must now have repeated, I was so much mortified and afflicted at the cruel tidings she brought me, that

however attentive I was to what she said, I had neither power nor will to answer one word; and, had she not stopped of herself, she might have gone on an hour longer, without interruption from me.

Observing this, and that I only sat weeping, my handkerchief covering my face, and my bosom heaving ready to burst; What! no answer, my dear?—Why so much *silent* grief? You know *I* always loved you. You know, that *I* have no interest in the affair. You would not permit Mr. Solmes to acquaint you with some things which would have set your heart against Mr. Lovelace. Shall I tell you some of the matters charged against him?—shall I, my dear?

Still I answered only by my tears and sighs.

Well, child, you shall be told these things afterwards, when you will be in a better state of mind to hear them; and then you will rejoice in the escape you will have had. It will be some excuse, then, for you to plead for your behaviour to Mr. Solmes, that you could not have believed Mr. Lovelace had been so very vile a man.

My heart fluttered with impatience and anger at being so plainly talked to as the wife of this man; but yet I then chose to be silent. If I had spoken, it would have been with vehemence.

Strange, my dear, such silence!—Your concern is infinitely more on this side the day, than it will be on the other.—But let me ask you, and do not be displeased, Will you choose to see what generous stipulations for you there are in the settlements?—You have knowledge beyond your years—give the writings a perusal: do, my dear: they are engrossed, and ready for signing, and have been for some time. Excuse me, my love—I mean not to disorder you:—your father would oblige me to bring them up, and to leave them with you. He commands you to read them.

But to read them, Niece—since they are engrossed, and *were* before you made them absolutely hopeless.

And then, to my great terror, out she drew some parchments from her handkerchief, which she had kept, (unobserved by me,) under her apron; and rising, put them in the opposite window. Had she produced a serpent, I could not have been more frightened.

Oh! my dearest Aunt, turning away my face, and holding out my hands, hide from my eyes those horrid parchments!—Let me conjure you to tell me—by all the tenderness of near relationship, and upon your honour, and by your love for me, say, Are they absolutely resolved, that, come what will, I must be that man's?

My dear, you must have Mr. Solmes: indeed you must.

Indeed I never will!—This, as I have said over and over, is not originally my father's will.—Indeed I never will—and that is all I will say!

It is your father's will *now*, replied my aunt: and, considering how all the family is threatened by Mr. Lovelace, and the resolution he has certainly taken to force you out of their hands, I cannot but say they are in the right, not to be bullied out of their child.

Well, Madam, then nothing remains for me to say. I am made desperate. I care not what becomes of me.

Your piety, and your prudence, my dear, and Mr. Lovelace's immoral character, together with his daring insults, and threatenings, which ought to incense *you*, as much as any body, are every one's dependence. We are sure the time will come, when you'll think very differently of the steps your friends take to disappoint a man who has made himself so justly obnoxious to them all.

She withdrew; leaving me full of grief and indigna-

tion:—and as much out of humour with Mr. Lovelace as with any body; who, by his conceited contrivances, has made things worse for me than before; depriving me of the hopes I had of gaining time to receive your advice, and private assistance to get to town; and leaving me no other advice, in all appearance, than either to throw myself upon his family, or to be made miserable for ever with Mr. Solmes. But I was still resolved to avoid both these evils, if possible.

I sounded Betty, in the first place, (whom my aunt sent up, not thinking it proper, as Betty told me, that I should be left by myself, and who, I found, knew their designs,) whether it were not probable that they would forbear, at my earnest entreaty, to push matters to the threatened extremity.

But she confirmed all my aunt said; rejoicing (as she said they all did) that Mr. Lovelace had given them so good a pretence to save me from him now, and for ever.

She ran on about equipages bespoken; talked of my brother's and sister's exultations that now the whole family would soon be reconciled to each other: of the servants' joy upon it: of the expected license: of a visit to be paid me by Dr. Lewen, or another clergyman, whom they named not to *her;* which was to crown the work: and of other preparations, so particular, as made me dread that they designed to surprise me into a still nearer day than next Wednesday.

These things made me excessively uneasy. I knew not what to resolve upon.

At one time, What have I to do, thought I, but to throw myself at once into the protection of Lady Betty Lawrance?—But then, in resentment of his *fine* contrivances, which had so abominably disconcerted me, I soon resolved to the contrary: and at last concluded to ask the favour of another half-hour's conversation with my aunt.

I sent Betty to her with my request.

She came.

I put it to her, in the most earnest manner, to tell me, whether I might not obtain the favour of a fortnight's respite?

She assured me, it would not be granted.

Would a week? Surely a week would?

She believed a week might, if I would promise two things: the first, upon my honour, not to write a line out of the house, in that week: for it was still suspected, she said, that I found means to write to *somebody*. And, secondly, to marry Mr. Solmes, at the expiration of it.

Impossible! Impossible! I said with passion—What! might not I be obliged with one week, without such a horrid condition as the last?

She would go down, she said, that she might not seem of her own head to put upon me what I thought a hardship so great.

She went down: and came up again.

Did I want, was the answer, to give the vilest of men an opportunity to put his murderous schemes into execution?—It was time for them to put an end to my obstinacy (they were tired out with me) and to his hopes at once. And an end *should* be put on Tuesday or Wednesday next, at furthest; unless I would give my honour to comply with the condition upon which my aunt had been so good as to allow me a longer time.

I even stamped with impatience!—I called upon her to witness, that I was guiltless of the consequence of this compulsion; this *barbarous* compulsion, I called it; let that consequence be what it would.

My aunt chid me in a higher strain than ever she did before.

While I, in a half phrensy, insisted upon seeing my

father; such usage, I said, set me above fear. I would rejoice to owe my death to him, as I did my life.

I did go down half way of the stairs, resolved to throw myself at his feet wherever he was.—My aunt was frighted. She owned, that she feared for my head.—Indeed I was in a perfect phrensy for a few minutes—but hearing my brother's voice, as talking to somebody in my sister's apartment just by, I stopt; and heard the barbarous designer say, speaking to my sister, This works charmingly, my dear Arabella!

It does! It does! said she, in an exulting accent.

Let us keep it up, said my brother.—The villain is caught in his own trap!—Now must she be what we would have her be.

Do you keep my father to it; I'll take care of my mother, said Bella.

Never fear, said he!—and a laugh of congratulation to each other, and derision of me (as I made it out) quite turned my frantic humour into a vindictive one.

My aunt then just coming down to me, and taking my hand led me up; and tried to sooth me.

My raving was turned into sullenness.

She preached patience and obedience to me.

I was silent.

At last she desired me to assure her, that I would offer no violence to myself.

God, I said, had given me more grace, I hoped, than to permit me to be guilty of so horrid a rashness, I was his creature, and not my own.

She then took leave of me; and I insisted upon her taking down with her the odious parchments.

Seeing me in so ill an humour, and very earnest that she should take them with her, she took them; but said, that my father should not know that she did: and hoped I would better consider of the matter, and be calmer next time they were offered to my perusal.

I revolved after she was gone all that my brother and sister had said. I dwelt upon their triumphings over me; and found rise in my mind a rancour that was new to me; and which I could not withstand.—And putting every thing together, dreading the near day, what could I do?—Am I in any manner excusable for what I *did* do?—If I shall be condemned by the world, who know not my provocations, may I be acquitted by you?—If *not*, I am unhappy indeed!—for this I did.

Having shaken off the impertinent Betty, I wrote to Mr. Lovelace, to let him know, 'That all that was threatened at my uncle Antony's, was intended to be executed *here*. That I had come to a resolution to throw myself upon the protection *of either of his two aunts*, who would afford it me—in short, that by endeavouring to obtain leave on Monday to dine in the ivy summer-house, I would, if possible, meet him without the garden-door, at two, three, four, or five o'clock on Monday afternoon, as I should be able. That in the mean time he should acquaint me, *whether I might hope for either of those ladies' protection:* and if I might, I absolutely insisted that *he should leave me with either, and go to London himself, or remain at Lord M.'s; nor offer to visit me, till I were satisfied that nothing could be done with my friends in an amicable way; and that I could not obtain possession of my own estate*, and leave to live upon it: and particularly, *that he should not hint marriage to me, till I consented to hear him upon that subject.*—I added, that if he could prevail upon one of the Misses Montague to *favour me with her company on the road*, it would make me abundantly more easy in the thoughts of carrying into effect a resolution which I had not come to, although so driven, but with the utmost reluctance and concern; and which would throw such a slur upon my reputation in the

eye of the world, as perhaps I should never be able to wipe off.'

This was the purport of what I wrote; and down into the garden I slid with it in the dark, which at another time I should not have had the courage to do; and deposited it, and came up again unknown to any body.

My mind so dreadfully misgave me when I returned, that, to divert in some measure my increasing uneasiness, I had recourse to my private pen; and in a very short time ran this length.

And now, that I am come to this part, my uneasy reflections begin again to pour in upon me. Yet what can I do?—I believe I shall take it back again the first thing I do in the morning—Yet what *can* I do?

And who knows but they may have a still earlier day in their intention, than that which will too soon come?

I hope to deposit this early in the morning for you, as I shall return from resuming my letter, if I do resume it as my *inwardest* mind bids me.

Although it is now near two o'clock, I have a good mind to slide down once more, in order to take back my letter. Our doors are always locked and barred up at eleven; but the seats of the lesser hall-windows being almost even with the ground without, and the shutters not difficult to open, I could easily get out.

Yet why should I be thus uneasy, since, should the letter go, I can but hear what Mr. Lovelace says to it? His aunts live at too great a distance for him to have an immediate answer from them; so I can scruple going to them till I have invitation. I can *insist* upon one of his cousins meeting me, as I have hinted, and accompanying me in the chariot; and may he not be able to obtain that favour from either of them. Twenty things may happen to afford me a suspension at least:

So all I durst venture upon, was, to step down to my poultry yard.

Why should I be so very uneasy?—When likewise I can take back my letter early, before it is probable he will have the thought of finding it there. Yet he owns he spends three parts of his days, and has done for this fortnight past, in loitering about sometimes in one disguise, sometimes in another, besides the attendance given by his trusty servant when he himself is not *in waiting*, as he calls it.

But these strange forebodings!—Yet I can, if you advise, cause the chariot he shall bring with him, to carry me directly for town, whither in my London scheme, if you were to approve it, I had proposed to go: and this will save you the trouble of procuring for me a vehicle; as well as prevent any suspicion from your mother of your contributing to my escape.

But, solicitous of your advice, and approbation too, if I *can* have it, I will put an end to this letter.

Adieu, my dearest friend, adieu!

LETTER XL

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday Morning, Seven o'clock, April 7.

My aunt Hervey, who is a very early riser, was walking in the garden (Betty attending her, as I saw from my window this morning) when I arose: for after such a train of fatigue and restless nights, I had unhappily overslept myself: so all I durst venture upon, was, to step down to my poultry-yard, and deposit mine of yesterday, and last night. And I am just come up; for she is still in the garden. This prevents me from going to resume my letter, as I think still to do; and hope it will not be too late.

I said, I had unhappily overslept myself: I went to bed about half an hour after two. I told the quarters till five; after which I dropt asleep, and awaked not till past six, and then in great terror, from a dream, which has made such an impression upon me, that, slightly as I think of dreams, I cannot help taking this opportunity to relate it to you.

'Methought my brother, my uncle Antony, and Mr. Solmes, had formed a plot to destroy Mr. Lovelace; who discovering it, and believing I had a hand in it, turned all his rage against me. I thought he made them all fly to foreign parts upon it; and afterwards seizing upon me, carried me into a church-yard; and there, notwithstanding, all my prayers and tears, and protestations of innocence, stabbed me to the heart, and then tumbled me into a deep grave ready dug, among two or three half-dissolved carcases; throwing in the dirt and earth upon me with his hands, and trampling it down with his feet.'

I awoke in a cold sweat, trembling, and in agonies; and still the frightful images raised by it remain upon my memory.

But why should I, who have such *real* evils to contend with, regard *imaginary* ones? This, no doubt, was owing to my disturbed imagination; huddling together wildly all the frightful ideas which my aunt's communications and discourse, my letter to Mr. Lovelace, my own uneasiness upon it, and the apprehensions of the dreaded Wednesday, furnished me with.

Eight o'clock.

The man, my dear, has got the letter!—What a strange diligence! I wish he mean me well, that he takes so much pains!—Yet, to be ingenuous, I must own, that I should be displeased if he took less—I

wish, however, he had been an hundred miles off!—What an advantage have I given him over me!

Now the letter is out of my power, I have more uneasiness and regret than I had before. For, till now, I had a doubt, whether it should or should not go: and now I think it ought *not* to have gone. And yet is there any other way than to do as I have done, if I would avoid Solmes? But what a giddy creature shall I be thought, if I pursue the course to which this letter must lead me?

My dearest friend, tell me, have I done wrong?—Yet do not *say* I have, if you *think* it; for should all the world besides condemn me, I shall have some comfort, if *you* do not. The first time I ever besought you to flatter me. That, of itself, is an indication that I have done wrong, and am afraid of hearing the truth—O tell me (but yet do not tell me) if I have done wrong!

Friday, Eleven o'clock.

My aunt has made me another visit. She began what she had to say with letting me know that my friends are all persuaded that I still correspond with Mr. Lovelace; as is plain, she said, by hints and menaces he throws out, which shew that he is apprized of several things that have passed between my relations and me, sometimes within a very little while after they have happened.

Although I approve not of the method he stoops to take to come at his intelligence, yet it is not prudent in me to clear myself by the ruin of the corrupted servant, (although his vileness has neither my connivance nor approbation,) since my doing so might occasion the detection of my own correspondence; and so frustrate all the hopes I have to avoid this Solmes. Yet it is not at all unlikely, that this very agent of Mr. Lovelace

acts a double part between my brother and him: How else can *our family* know (so *soon* too) his menaces upon the passages they hint at?

I assured my aunt, that I was too much ashamed of the treatment I met with (and that for every one's sake as well as for my own) to acquaint Mr. Lovelace with the particulars of that treatment, even were the means of corresponding with him afforded me: that I had reason to think, that if he were to know of it from me, we must be upon such terms, that he would not scruple making some visits, which would give me great apprehensions. They all knew, I said, that I had no communication with any of my father's servants, except my sister's Betty Barnes: for although I had a good opinion of them all, and believed, if left to their own inclinations, that they would be glad to serve me; yet, finding by their shy behaviour, that they were under particular direction, I had forborn, ever since my Hannah had been so disgracefully dismissed, so much as to speak to any of them, for fear I should be the occasion of their losing their places too. They must, therefore, account among *themselves* for the intelligence Mr. Lovelace met with, since neither my brother nor sister, (as Betty had frequently, in praise of their open hearts, informed me,) nor perhaps their favourite Mr. Solmes, were at all careful before whom they spoke, when they had any thing to throw out against him, or even against *me*, whom they took great pride to join with him on this occasion.

It was but too natural, my aunt said, for my friends to suppose that he had his intelligence (part of it at least) from me; who, thinking yourself hardly treated, might complain of it, if not to him, to Miss Howe; which, perhaps, might be the same thing; for they knew Miss Howe spoke as freely of them, as they could do of Mr. Lovelace; and must have the par-

ticulars she spoke of from somebody who knew what was done here. That this determined my father to bring the whole matter to a speedy issue, lest fatal consequences should ensue.

I perceive you are going to speak with warmth, proceeded she: [*and so I was*] for my own part I am sure, you would not write any thing, if you *do* write, to inflame so violent a spirit.—But this is not the end of my present visit.

You cannot, my dear, but be convinced, that your father *will* be *obeyed*. The more you contend against his will, the more he thinks himself obliged to assert his authority. Your mother desires me to tell you, that if you will give her the least hopes of a dutiful compliance, she will be willing to see you in her closet just now, while your father is gone to take a walk in the garden.

Astonishing perseverance! said I—I am tired with making declarations and with pleadings on this subject; and had hoped, that my resolution being so well known, I should not have been further urged upon it.

You mistake the purport of my present visit, Miss: [looking gravely]—Heretofore you have been *desired* and *prayed* to obey and oblige your friends. *Entreaty* is at an end: they give it up. Now it is *resolved upon*, that your father's will *is to be obeyed;* as it is fit it should. Some things are laid at your door, as if you concurred with Lovelace's threatened violence to carry you off, which your mother will not believe. She will tell you her own good opinion of you. She will tell you how much she still loves you; and what she expects of you on the approaching occasion. But yet, that she may not be exposed to an opposition which would the more provoke her, she desires that you will first assure her that you go down with a resolution to do that with a grace which must be done with or with-

out a grace. And besides, she wants to give you some advice how to proceed in order to reconcile yourself to your father, and to every body else. Will you go down, Miss Clary, or will you not?

I said, I should think myself happy, could I be admitted to my mother's presence, after so long a banishment from it; but that I could not wish it upon those terms.

And this is your answer, Niece?

It must be my answer, Madam. Come what may, I never will have Mr. Solmes. It is cruel to press this matter so often upon me.—I never will have that man.

Down she went with displeasure. I could not help it. I was quite tired with so many attempts, all to the same purpose. I am amazed that they are not!—So little variation! and no concession on either side!

I will go down and deposit this; for Betty has seen I have been writing. The saucy creature took a napkin, and dipt it in water, and with a fleering air, here, Miss; holding the wet corner to me.

What's that for? said I.

Only, Miss, one of the fingers of your right-hand, if you please to look at it.

It was inky.

I gave her a look; but said nothing.

But, lest I should have another search, I will close here.

Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XLI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Friday, One o'clock.

I HAVE a letter from Mr. Lovelace, full of transports, vows, and promises. I will send it to you enclosed. You'll see how 'he engages in it for Lady Betty's protection, and for Miss Charlotte Montague's accompanying me. I have nothing to do, but to persevere, he says, and prepare to receive the personal congratulations of his whole family.'

But you'll see how he presumes upon my being *his*, as the consequence of throwing myself into that lady's protection.

'The chariot and six is to be ready at the place he mentions. You'll see as to the slur upon my reputation, about which I am so apprehensive, how boldly he argues.' Generously enough, indeed, were I to be *his;* and had given him to believe that I would.—But that I have not done.

How one step brings on another with this encroaching sex; how soon may a young creature, who gives a man the least encouragement, be carried beyond her intentions, and out of her own power! You would imagine, by what he writes, that I have given him reason to think that my aversion to Mr. Solmes is all owing to my favour for him.

The dreadful thing is, that comparing what he writes from his intelligencer of what is designed against me (though he seems not to know the threatened day) with what my aunt and Betty assure me of, there can be no hope for me, but that I must be Solmes's wife, if I stay here.

I had better have gone to my uncle Antony's at this

rate. I should have gained time, at least, by it. This is the fruit of his fine contrivances!

'What we are to do, and how good he is to be: how I am to direct all his future steps.' All this shews, as I said before, that he is sure of me.

However I have replied to the following effect: 'That although I had given him room to expect that I would put myself into the *protection of one of the ladies of his family;* yet as I have three days to come, between this and Monday, and as I still hope that my friends will relent, or that Mr. Solmes will give up a point they will find it impossible to carry; I shall not look upon myself as *absolutely bound by the appointment:* and expect therefore, if I recede, that I shall not again be called to account for it by him. That I think it necessary to acquaint him, that if by throwing myself upon Lady Betty Lawrance's protection, as he proposed, he understands, *that I mean directly to put myself into his power, he is very much mistaken:* for that there are *many points in which I must be satisfied; several matters to be adjusted,* even after I have left this house, (if I *do* leave it,) *before I can think of giving him any particular encouragement:* that in the *first place* he must expect that I will do my utmost to *procure my father's reconciliation and approbation of my future steps;* and that *I will govern myself entirely by his commands,* in every reasonable point, *as much as if I had not left his house:* that if he imagines I shall not reserve to myself this liberty, but that my withdrawing is to give him any advantages which he would *not otherwise have had;* I am determined to stay where I am, and abide the event, in hopes that my friends will still accept of my reiterated promise *never to marry him, or any body else, without their consent.*

This I will deposit as soon as I can. And as he thinks things are near their crisis, I dare say it will not be long before I have an answer to it.

Friday, Four o'clock.

I am really ill. I was used to make the best of any little accidents that befel me, for fear of making my *then* affectionate friends uneasy: but now I shall make the worst of my indisposition, in hopes to obtain a suspension of the threatened evil of Wednesday next. And if I do obtain it, will postpone my appointment with Mr. Lovelace.

Betty has told them that I am very much indisposed. But I have no pity from any body.

I believe I am become the object of every one's aversion; and that they would all be glad I were dead. Indeed I believe it. 'What ails the perverse creature?' cries one:—'Is she love-sick?' another.

I was in the ivy summer-house, and came out shivering with cold, as if aguishly affected. Betty observed this, and reported it.—'O no matter!—Let her shiver on!—Cold cannot hurt her. Obstinacy will defend her from harm. Perverseness is a bracer to a love-sick girl, and more effectual than the cold bath to make hardy, although the constitution be ever so tender.'

This said by a cruel brother, and heard said by the dearer friends of one, for whom, but a few months ago, every body was apprehensive at the least blast of wind to which she exposed herself!

Betty, it must be owned, has an admirable memory on these occasions. Nothing of this nature is lost by her repetition: even the very air with which she repeats what she hears said, renders it unnecessary to ask, who spoke this or that severe thing.

Friday, Six o'clock.

My aunt, who again stays all night, has just left me. She came to tell me the result of my friends' deliberations about me. It is this:

Next Wednesday morning they are all to be assembled: to wit, my father, mother, my uncles, herself, and my uncle Hervey; my brother and sister of course: my good Mrs. Norton is likewise to be admitted: and Dr. Lewen is to be at hand, to exhort me, it seems, if there be occasion: but my aunt is not certain whether he is to be among them, or to tarry till called in.

When this awful court is assembled, the poor prisoner is to be brought in, supported by Mrs. Norton; who is to be first tutored to instruct me in the duty of a child; which it seems I have forgotten.

Nor is the success at all doubted, my aunt says: since it is not believed that I can be hardened enough to withstand the expostulations of so venerable a judicature, although I have withstood those of several of them separately. And still the less, as she hints at *extraordinary condescensions from my father*. But what condescensions, from even my father, can induce me to make such a sacrifice as is expected from me?

Yet my spirits will never bear up, I doubt, at such a tribunal—my father presiding in it.

Indeed I expected that my trials would not be at an end till he had admitted me into his awful presence.

What is hoped from me, she says, is, that I will cheerfully, on Tuesday night, if not before, sign the articles; and so turn the succeeding day's solemn convention into a day of festivity. I am to have the license sent me up, however, and once more the settlements, that I may see how much in earnest they are.

She further hinted, that my father himself would bring up the settlements for me to sign.

O my dear! what a trial will this be!—How shall I be able to refuse my father the writing of my name? —To my father, from whose presence I have been so long banished!—He commanding and entreating,

perhaps, in a breath!—How shall I be able to refuse this to my father?

They are sure, she says, something is working on Mr. Lovelace's part, and perhaps on mine: and my father would sooner follow me to the grave, than see me *his* wife.

I said, I was not well: that the very apprehensions of these trials were already insupportable to me; and would increase upon me, as the time approached; and I was afraid I should be extremely ill.

They had prepared themselves for such an *artifice* as that, was my aunt's unkind word; and she could assure me, it would stand me in no stead.

Artifice! repeated I: and this from my aunt Hervey?

Why, my dear, said she, do you think people are fools?—Can they not see how dismally you endeavour to sigh yourself down within-doors?—How you hang down your *sweet face* [those were the words she was pleased to use] upon your bosom?—How you totter, as it were, and hold by this chair, and by that door post, when you know that any body sees you? [This, my dear Miss Howe, is an aspersion to fasten hypocrisy and contempt upon me: my brother's or sister's aspersion!—I am not capable of arts so low.] But the moment you are down with your poultry, or advancing upon your garden-walk, and, as you imagine, out of every body's sight, it is seen how nimbly you trip along; and what an alertness governs all your motions.

I should hate myself, said I, were I capable of such poor *artifices* as these. I must be a fool to use them, as well as a mean creature; for have I not had experience enough, that my friends are incapable of being moved in much more *affecting instances?*—But you'll see how I shall be by Tuesday.

My dear, you will not offer any violence to your health?—I hope, God has given you more grace than to do that.

I hope he has, Madam. But there is violence enough offered, and threatened, to affect my health; and so it will be found, without my needing to have recourse to any other, or to *artifice* either.

I'll only tell you one thing, my dear: and that is, ill or well, the ceremony will probably be performed before Wednesday night:—but this, also, I will tell you, although beyond my present commission, That Mr. Solmes will be under an engagement (if you should require it of him as a favour) after the ceremony is passed, and Lovelace's hopes thereby utterly extinguished, to leave you at your father's, and return to his own house every evening, until you are brought to a full sense of your duty, and consent to acknowledge your change of name.

There was no opening of my lips to such a speech as this. I was dumb.

And these, my dear Miss Howe, are they who, *some* of them at least, have called me a romantic girl!—This is my chimerical brother, and wise sister; both joining their heads together, I dare say. And yet, my aunt told me, that the last part was what took in my mother: who had, till that expedient was found out, insisted, that her child should not be married, if, through grief or opposition, she should be ill, or fall into fits.

This intended violence my aunt often excused, by the certain information they pretended to have, of some plots or machinations, that were ready to break out, from Mr. Lovelace: * the effects of which were thus cunningly to be frustrated.

* It may not be amiss to observe in this place, that Mr. Lovelace artfully contrived to drive the family on, by per-

Friday, Nine o'clock.

And now, my dear, what shall I conclude upon? You see how determined—But how can I expect your advice will come time enough to stand me in any stead? For here I have been down, and already have another letter from Mr. Lovelace [*the man lives upon the spot, I think:*] and I must write to him, either that I will or will not stand to my first resolution of escaping hence on Monday next. If I let him know that I will not, (appearances so strong *against* him and *for* Solmes, even stronger than when I made the appointment,) will it not be justly deemed my own fault, if I am compelled to marry their odious man? And if any mischief ensue from Mr. Lovelace's rage and disappointment, will it not lie at my door?—Yet, he offers so fair!—Yet, on the other hand, to incur the censure of the world, as a giddy creature—but that, as he hints, I have already incurred—What can I do?—Oh! that my cousin Morden—But what signifies wishing?

I will here give you the substance of Mr. Lovelace's letter. The letter itself I will send, when I have answered it; but that I will defer doing as long as I can, in hopes of finding reason to retract an appointment on which so much depends. And yet it is necessary you should have all before you as I go along, that you may be the better able to advise me in this dreadful crisis.

'He begs my pardon for writing with so much assurance; attributing it to his unbounded transport; and entirely acquiesces in my will. He is full of alternatives and proposals. He offers *to attend me directly to Lady Betty's;* or, if I had rather, *to my*

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mitting *his* and *their* agent Leman to report machinations, which he had neither intention nor power to execute.

own estate; and that my Lord M. shall protect me there.' [He knows not, my dear, my reasons for rejecting this inconsiderate advice.] 'In either case, as soon as he sees me safe, he will go up to London, or whither I please; and not come near me, but by my own permission; and till I am satisfied in every thing I am doubtful of, as well with regard to his reformation, as to settlements, &c.

'To *conduct me to you*, my dear, is another of his proposals, not doubting, he says, but your mother will receive me: * or, if that be not agreeable to you, or to your mother, or to me, he will put me *into Mr. Hickman's* protection; whom, no doubt he says, you can influence; and that it may be given out, that I am gone to Bath, or Bristol, or abroad; wherever I please.

'Again, if it be more agreeable, he proposes *to attend me privately to London*, where he will procure handsome lodgings for me, and *both his cousins Montague to receive me in them, and to accompany me till all shall be adjusted to my mind;* and *till a reconciliation shall be effected;* which he assures me nothing shall be wanting in him to facilitate, greatly as he has been insulted by all my family.

'These several measures he proposes to my choice; as it was unlikely, he says, that he could procure, *in the time*, a letter from Lady Betty, under her own hand, to invite me in form to her house, unless he had been himself to go to that lady for it; which, at this critical conjuncture, while he is attending my commands, is impossible.

'He conjures me, in the most solemn manner, if I would not throw him into utter despair, to keep to my appointment.

'However, instead of threatening my relations, or

* See Note on p. 31 of this Volume.

Solmes, if I recede, he respectfully says, that he doubts not, but that, if I *do*, it will be upon such reasons, as he ought to be satisfied with; upon no slighter, he hopes, than their leaving me at full liberty to pursue my own inclinations: in which (whatever they shall be) he will entirely acquiesce; only endeavouring *to make his future good behaviour the sole ground for his expectation of my favour.*

'In short, he solemnly vows, that his *whole* view, at present, is to free me from my imprisonment; and to restore me to my own free-will, in a point so absolutely necessary to my future happiness. He declares, that neither the hopes he has of my future favour, nor the consideration of his own and family's honour, will permit him to propose any thing *that shall be inconsistent with my own most scrupulous notions:* and, for my mind's sake, should choose to have the proposed end obtained by my friends declining to compel me. But that nevertheless, as to the world's opinion, it is impossible to imagine that the behaviour of my relations to me has not already brought upon my family those free censures which they deserve, and caused the step which I am so scrupulous about taking, to be no other than the *natural* and *expected* consequence of their treatment of me.'

Indeed, I am afraid all this is true: and it is owing to some little degree of politeness, that Mr. Lovelace does not say all he might say on this subject: for I have no doubt that I am the talk, and perhaps the bye-word of half the county. If so, I am afraid I can now do nothing that will give me more disgrace than I have already so causelessly received by their indiscreet persecutions: and let me be whose I will, and do what I will, I shall never wipe off the stain which my confinement, and the rigorous usage I have received, have fixed upon me; at least in my own opinion.

I wish, if ever I am to be considered as one of the eminent family this man is allied to, some of them do not think the worse of me for the disgrace I have received. In that case, perhaps, I shall be obliged to him, if *he* do not. You see how much this harsh, this cruel treatment from my own family has humbled me! But perhaps I was too much exalted before.

Mr. Lovelace concludes, 'with repeatedly begging an interview with me; and that, *this* night, if possible: an hour, he says, he is the more encouraged to solicit for, as I had twice before made him hope for it. But whether he obtain it or not, he beseeches me to choose one of the alternatives he offers to my acceptance; and not to depart from my resolution of escaping on Monday, unless the reason ceases on which I had taken it up; and that I have a prospect of being restored to the favour of my friends; at least to my own liberty, and freedom of choice.'

He renews all his vows and promises on this head in so earnest and so solemn a manner, that (his own *interest*, and his family's *honour*, and their *favour* for me, co-operating) I can have no room to doubt of his sincerity.

LETTER XLII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Sat. Morn. Eight o'clock, April 8.

WHETHER you will blame me or not, I cannot tell, but I have deposited a letter confirming my resolution to leave this house on Monday next, within the hour mentioned in my former, if possible. I have not kept a copy of it. But this is the substance:

I tell him, 'That I have no way to avoid the deter-

mined resolution of my friends in behalf of Mr. Solmes, but by abandoning this house by his assistance.'

I have not pretended to make a merit with him on this score; for I plainly tell him, 'That could I, *without an unpardonable sin*, die when I *would*, I would sooner make death my choice, than take a step, which all the world, if not my own heart, would condemn me for taking.'

I tell him, 'That I shall not try to bring any other clothes with me than those I shall have on; and those but my common wearing-apparel; lest I should be suspected. That I must expect to be denied the possession of my estate: but that I am determined never to consent to a litigation with my father, were I to be reduced to ever so low a state: so that the protection I am to be obliged for to any one, must be alone for the distress sake. That, therefore, he will have nothing to hope for from this step *that he had not before:* and that in every light I reserve to myself to *accept or refuse his address, as his behaviour and circumspection shall appear to me to deserve.*'

I tell him, 'That I think it best to go into a private lodging, in the neighbourhood of Lady Betty Lawrance; and not to her ladyship's house; that it may not appear to the world *that I have refuged myself in his family;* and that a reconciliation with my friends may not, on that account, be made impracticable: that I will send for thither my faithful Hannah; and apprize only Miss Howe where I am: that *he shall instantly leave me*, and go to London, or to one of Lord M.'s seats; and (as he had promised) not come near me, but by my leave; contenting himself with a correspondence by letter only.

'That if I find myself in danger of being discovered, and carried back by violence, I will then throw myself directly into the protection either of Lady

Betty or Lady Sarah: but *this only in case of absolute necessity;* for that it will be more to my reputation, for me, by the best means I can, (taking advantage of my privacy,) to enter by a second or third hand *into a treaty of reconciliation with my friends.*

'That I must, however, plainly tell him, 'That if, in this treaty, my friends *insist upon my resolving against marrying him, I will engage to comply with them;* provided they will allow me to promise him, *that I will never be the wife of any other man while he remains single, or is living:* that this is a compliment I am willing to pay him, in return for the trouble and pains he has taken, and the usage he has met with on my account: although I intimate, that he may, in a great measure, thank himself (by reason of the little regard he has paid to his reputation) for the slights he has met with.'

I tell him, 'That I may, in this privacy, write to my cousin Morden, and, if possible, interest him in my cause.

'I take some brief notice then of his alternatives.'

You must think, my dear, that this unhappy force upon me, and this projected flight, make it necessary for me to account to him much sooner than I should otherwise choose to do, for every part of my conduct.

'It is not to be expected, I tell him, that your mother will embroil herself, or suffer you or Mr. Hickman to be embroiled, on my account: and as to his proposal of my going to London, I am such an absolute stranger to every body there, and have such a bad opinion of the place, that I cannot by any means think of going thither; except I should be induced, some time hence, by the ladies of his family to attend them.

'As to the meeting he is desirous of, I think it by no means proper; especially as it is so likely that I

may soon see him. But that if any thing occurs to induce me to change my mind, as to withdrawing, I will *then take the first opportunity to see him, and give him my reasons for that change.*

This, my dear, I the less scrupled to write, as it might qualify him to bear such a disappointment, should I give it him; he having, besides, behaved so very unexceptionably when he surprised me some time ago in the lonely wood-house.

Finally, 'I commend myself, as a person in distress, and *merely as such*, to *his* honour, and to the protection of the ladies of his family. I repeat [most cordially, I am sure!] my deep concern for being forced to take a step so disagreeable, and so derogatory to my honour. And having told him, that I will endeavour to obtain leave to dine in the Ivy Summer-house,* and to send Betty of some errand, when there, I leave the rest to him; but imagine, that about four o'clock will be a proper time for him to contrive some signal to let me know he is at hand, and for me to unbolt the garden-door.'

I added, by way of postscript, 'That their suspicions seeming to increase, I advise him to contrive to send or come to the usual place, as frequently as possible, in the interval of time till Monday morning ten or eleven

* The *Ivy Summer-house* (or *Ivy Bower*, as it was sometimes called in the family) was a place, that from a girl, this young lady delighted in. She used, in the summer months, frequently to sit and work, and read, and write, and draw, and (when permitted) to breakfast, and dine, and sometimes to sup, in it; especially when Miss Howe, who had an equal liking to it, was her visiter and guest.

She describes it, in another letter (which appears not) as 'pointing to a pretty variegated landscape of wood, water, and hilly country; which had pleased her so much, that she had drawn it; the piece hanging up, in her parlour, among some of her other drawings.'

o'clock; as something may possibly happen to make me alter my mind.'

O my dear Miss Howe!—what a sad, sad thing is the necessity, forced upon me, for all this preparation and contrivance!—But it is now too late!—But how!—*Too late*, did I say?—What a word is *that!*—What a dreadful thing, *were* I to repent, to *find* it to be too late to remedy the apprehended evil!

Saturday, Ten o'clock.

Mr. Solmes is here. He is to dine with his new relations, as Betty tells me he already calls them.

He would have thrown himself in my way once more: but I hurried up to my prison, in my return from my garden-walk, to avoid him.

I had, when in the garden, the curiosity to see if my letter were gone: I cannot say with an intention to take it back again if it were not, because I see not how I could do otherwise than I have done; yet, what a caprice! when I found it gone, I began (as yesterday morning) to wish it had not: for no other reason, I believe, than because it was out of my power.

A strange diligence in this man!—He *says*, he almost lives upon the place; and I think so too.

He mentions, as you will see in his letter, four several disguises, which he puts on in one day. It is a wonder, nevertheless, that he has not been seen by some of our tenants: for it is impossible that any disguise can hide the gracefulness of his figure. But this is to be said, that the adjoining grounds being all in our own hands, and no common foot-paths near that part of the garden, and through the park and coppice, nothing can be more bye and unfrequented.

Then they are less watchful, I believe, over my garden-walks, and my poultry-visits, depending, as my aunt hinted, upon the bad character they have taken so

much pains to fasten upon Mr. Lovelace. This, they think, (and *justly* think,) must fill me with doubts. And then the regard I have hitherto had for my reputation is another of their securities. Were it not for these two, they would not surely have used me as they have done; and at the same time left me the opportunities which I have several times had, to get away, had I been disposed to do so: * and, indeed, their dependence on both these motives would have been well founded, had they kept but tolerable measures with me.

Then, perhaps, they have no notion of the back-door; as it is seldom opened, and leads to a place so pathless and lonesome.† If not, there *can* be no other way to escape (if one would) unless by the plashy lane, so full of springs, by which your servant reaches the solitary wood-house; to which lane one must descend from a high bank, that bounds the poultry yard. For, as to the front-way, you know, one must pass through the house to that, and in sight of the

* They might, no doubt, make a dependence upon the reasons she gives: but their chief reliance was upon the vigilance of their Joseph Leman; little imagining what an implement he was of Mr. Lovelace.

† This, in another of her letters, (which neither is inserted,) is thus described:—'A piece of ruins upon it, the remains of an old chapel, now standing in the midst of the coppice; here and there an over-grown oak, surrounded with ivy and misletoe, starting up, to sanctify, as it were, the awful solemnness of the place: a spot, too, where a man having been found hanging some years ago, it was used to be thought of by us when children, and by the maid-servants, with a degree of terror, (it being actually the habitation of owls, ravens, and other ominous birds,) as haunted by ghosts, goblins, spectres: the genuine result of the country loneliness and ignorance: notions which, early propagated, are apt to leave impressions even upon minds grown strong enough at the same time to despise the like credulous follies in others.'

parlours, and the servants' hall; and then have the open court-yard to go through, and, by means of the iron-gate, be full in view, as one passes over the lawn, for a quarter of a mile together; the young plantations of elms and limes affording yet but little shade or covert.

The Ivy Summer-house is the most convenient for this heart-affecting purpose of any spot in the garden, as it is not far from the back-door, and yet in another alley, as you may remember. Then it is seldom resorted to by any body else, except in the summer-months, because it is cool. When they loved me, they would often, for this reason, object to my long continuance in it:—but now, it is no matter what becomes of me. Besides, *cold is a bracer*, as my brother said yesterday.

Here I will deposit what I have written. Let me have your prayers, my dear; and your approbation, or your censure, of the steps I have taken: for yet it may not be quite too late to revoke the appointment. I am

Your most affectionate and faithful

Cl. Harlowe.

Why will you send your servant empty-handed?

LETTER XLIII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Sat. Afternoon.

By your last date of ten o'clock in your letter of this day, you could not long have deposited it before Robin took it. He rode hard, and brought it to me just as I had risen from table.

You may justly blame me for sending my messenger empty-handed, your situation considered; and yet that very situation (so critical!) is partly the reason for it: for indeed I knew not what to write, fit to send you.

I have been inquiring privately, how to procure you a conveyance from Harlowe-place, and yet not appear in it; knowing, that to oblige in the *fact*, and to disoblige in the *manner*, is but obliging by halves: my mother being moreover very suspicious, and very uneasy; made more so by daily visits from your uncle Antony; who tells her, that every thing is now upon the point of being determined; and hopes, that her daughter will not so interfere, as to discourage your compliance with their wills. This I came at by a way that I cannot take notice of, or *both* should hear of it in a manner *neither* would like: and, *without* that, my mother and I have had almost hourly bickerings.

I found more difficulty than I expected (as the time was confined, and secrecy required, and as you so earnestly forbid me to accompany you in your enterprise) in procuring you a vehicle. Had you not obliged me to keep measures with my mother, I could have managed it with ease. I could even have taken our own chariot, on one pretence or other, and put two horses extraordinary to it, if I had thought fit; and I could, when we had got to London, have sent it back, and nobody the wiser as to the lodgings we might have taken.

I wish to the Lord you had permitted this. Indeed I think you are too punctilious a great deal for your situation. Would you expect to enjoy yourself with your usual placidness, and not to be ruffled, in an hurricane which every moment threatens to blow your house down?

Had your distress sprung from yourself, that would

have been another thing. But when all the world knows where to lay the fault, this alters the case.

How can you say I am happy, when my mother, to her power, is as much an abettor of their wickedness to my dearest friend, as your aunt, or any body else?—and this through the instigation of that odd-headed and foolish uncle of yours, who [sorry creature that he is!] keeps her up to resolutions which are unworthy of her, for an example to me, if it please you. Is not this cause enough for me to ground a resentment upon, sufficient to justify me for accompanying you; the friendship between us so well known?

Indeed, my dear, the importance of the case considered, I must repeat, that you are too nice. Don't they already think that your non-compliance with their odious measures is owing a good deal to my advice? Have they not prohibited our correspondence upon that very surmise? And have I, but on *your* account, reason to value *what* they think?

Besides, What discredit have I to fear by such a step? What detriment? Would Hickman, do you believe, refuse me upon it?—If he did, should I be sorry for that?—Who is it, that has a soul, who would not be affected by such an instance of female friendship?

But I should vex and disorder my mother!—Well, that is something: but not more than she vexes and disorders me, on her being made an implement by such a sorry creature, who ambles hither every day in spite to my dearest friend—Woe be to *both*, if it be for a *double end!*—Chide me, if you will: I don't care.

I say, and I insist upon it, such a step would *ennoble* your friend: and if still you will permit it, I will take the office out of Lovelace's hands; and, to-morrow evening, or on Monday before his time of appointment

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takes place, will come in a chariot, or chaise: and then, my dear, if we get off as I wish, will we make terms (and what terms we please) with them all. My mother will be glad to receive her daughter again, I warrant: and Hickman will cry for *joy* on my return; or he shall for *sorrow*.

But you are so very earnestly angry with me for proposing such a step, and have always so much to say for your side of *any* question, that I am afraid to urge it farther.—Only be so good (let me add) as to encourage me to resume it, if, upon farther consideration, and upon weighing matters well, (and in *this* light, whether best to go off with *me*, or with *Lovelace*,) you can get over your punctilious regard for my reputation. A woman going away with a *woman* is not so discreditable a thing, surely! and with no view, but to *avoid the fellows!*—I say, only be so good, as to *consider* this point; and if you *can* get over your scruples on *my* account, do. And so I will have done with this argument for the present; and apply myself to some of the passages in yours.

A time, I hope, will come, that I shall be able to read your affecting narratives without that impatient bitterness which now boils over in my heart, and would flow to my pen, were I to enter into the particulars of what you write. And indeed I am afraid of giving you my advice at all, or telling you what I should do in your case (supposing you will still refuse my offer; finding too what you have been brought or rather driven to without it); lest any evil should follow it: in which case, I should never forgive myself. And this consideration has added to my difficulties in writing to you now you are upon such a crisis, and yet refuse the *only* method—but I said, I would not for the present touch any more that string. Yet, one word more, chide me if you please: If any harm betide you, I shall for

ever blame my mother—indeed I shall—and perhaps yourself, if you do not accept of my offer.

But one thing, in your present situation and prospects, let me advise: It is this, that if you *do* go off with Mr. Lovelace, you take the first opportunity to marry. Why should you *not*, when every body will know by *whose* assistance, and in *whose* company, you leave your father's house, go whithersoever you will? —You may indeed keep him at a distance, until settlements are drawn, and such like matters are adjusted to your mind: but even these are matters of less consideration in your particular case, than they would be in that of most others: and first, *because*, be his other faults what they will, nobody thinks him an ungenerous man: next, *because* the possession of your estate must be given up to you as soon as your cousin Morden comes; who, as your trustee, will see it done; and done upon proper terms: 3dly, *because* there is no want of fortune on his side: 4thly, *because* all his family value you, and are extremely desirous that you should be their relation: 5thly, *because* he makes no scruple of accepting you without conditions. You see how he has always defied your relations: [I, for my own part, can forgive him for the fault: nor know I, if it be not a noble one:] and I dare say, he had rather call you *his*, without a shilling, than be under obligation to those whom he has full as little reason to love, as they have to love him. You have heard, that his own relations cannot make his proud spirit submit to owe any favour to them.

For all these reasons, I think, you may the less stand upon previous settlements. It is therefore my absolute opinion, that, if you *do* withdraw with him, (and in that case you must let *him* be judge when he can leave you with safety, *you'll observe that*,) you should not postpone the ceremony.

Give this matter your most serious consideration. Punctilio is out of doors the moment you are out of your father's house. I know how justly severe you have been upon those inexcusable creatures, whose giddiness and even want of decency have made them, in the *same hour* as I may say, leap from a parent's window to a husband's bed—but considering Lovelace's character, I repeat my opinion, that your *reputation* in the eye of the world requires that no delay be made in *this* point, when once you are in his power.

I need not, I am sure, make a stronger plea to *you*.

You say, in excuse for my mother, (what my fervent love for my friend very ill brooks,) that we ought not to blame any one for not doing what she has an option to do, or to let alone. This, in cases of friendship, would admit of very strict discussion. If the thing requested be of *greater* consequence, or even of *equal*, to the person sought to, and it were, as the old phrase has it, *to take a thorn out of one's friend's foot to put it into one's own*, something might be said.—Nay, it would be, I will venture to say, a selfish thing in us to ask a favour of a friend which would subject that friend to the *same* or *equal* inconvenience as that from which we wanted to be relieved, The requested would, in this case, teach his friend, by his *own* selfish example, with much *better* reason, to deny him, and despise a friendship so *merely* nominal. But if, by a *less* inconvenience to ourselves, we could relieve our friend from a *greater*, the refusal of such a favour makes the refuser unworthy of the name of a friend: nor would I admit such a one, not even into the *outermost* fold of my heart.

I am well aware that this is your opinion of friendship, as well as mine: for I owe the distinction to you, upon a certain occasion; and it saved me from a very great inconvenience, as you must needs remember. But you were always for making excuses for *other* people,

in cases wherein you would not have allowed of one for *yourself*.

I must own, that were these excuses for a friend's indifference, or denial, made by any body but *you*, in a case of such *vast* importance to herself, and of so comparative a *small* one to those for whose protection she would be thought to wish; I, who am for ever, as you have often remarked, endeavouring to trace effects to their causes, should be ready to suspect that there was a latent, unowned inclination, which balancing, or *preponderating* rather, made the issue of the alternative (however important) sit more lightly upon the excuser's mind than she cared to own.

You will understand me, my dear. But if you do not, it may be as well for me; for I am afraid I shall *have it* from you for but starting such a notion, or giving a hint, which perhaps, as you did once in another case, you will reprimandingly call, 'Not being able to forego the ostentation of sagacity, though at the expense of that tenderness which is due to friendship and charity.'

What signifies owning a fault without mending it, you'll say?—Very true, my dear. But you know I ever was a saucy creature—ever stood in need of great allowances.—And I remember, likewise, that I ever had them from my dear Clarissa. Nor do I doubt them now: for you know how much I love you—if it be possible, *more* than *myself* I love you! Believe me, my dear: and, in consequence of that belief, you will be able to judge how much I am affected by your present distressful and critical situation; which will not suffer me to pass by without a censure even that *philosophy* of temper in your own cause, which you have not in another's, and which all that know you ever admired you for.

From this critical and distressful situation, it shall be my hourly prayers that you may be delivered without

blemish to that fair fame which has hitherto, like your heart, been unspotted.

With this prayer, twenty times repeated, concludes

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

I hurried myself in writing this; and I hurry Robin away with it, that, in a situation so very critical, you may have all the time possible to consider what I have written, upon two points so very important. I will repeat them in a very few words:

'Whether you choose not rather to go off with one of *your own sex;* with your ANNA HOWE—than with one of the *other;* with Mr. LOVELACE?'

And if *not*,

'Whether you should not marry him as soon as possible?'

LETTER XLIV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

[*The preceding Letter not received.*]

Saturday Afternoon.

ALREADY have I an ecstatic answer, as I may call it, to my letter.

'He promises compliance with my will in every article: approves of all I propose; particularly of the private lodging: and thinks it a happy expedient to obviate the censures of the busy and the unreflecting: and yet he hopes, that the putting myself into the protection of either of his aunts, (treated as I am treated,) would be far from being looked upon by any body in a disreputable light. But every thing I enjoin or resolve

upon must, he says, be right, not only with respect to my present but future reputation; with regard to which, he hopes so to behave himself, as to be *allowed* to be, next to myself, more *properly* solicitous than any body. He will only assure me, that his whole family are extremely desirous to take advantage of the persecutions I labour under to make their court, and endear themselves to me, by their best and most cheerful services: happy if they can in any measure contribute to my present freedom and future happiness.

'He will this afternoon, he says, write to Lord M. and to Lady Betty and Lady Sarah, that he is now within view of being the happiest man in the world, if it be not his own fault; since the only woman upon earth that can make him so will be soon out of danger of being another man's; and cannot possibly prescribe any terms to him that he shall not think it his duty to comply with.

'He flatters himself now (my last letter *confirming* my resolution) that he can be in no apprehension of my changing my mind, unless my friends change their manner of acting by me; which he is too sure they will not.* And now will all his relations, who take such a kind and generous share in his interests, glory and pride themselves in the prospects he has before him.'

Thus artfully does he hold me to it.

'As to fortune, he begs of me not to be solicitous on that score: that his own estate is sufficient for us both; not a *nominal*, but a *real*, two thousand pounds *per annum*, equivalent to some estates reputed a third more: that it never was encumbered; that he is clear of the world, both as to book and bond debts; thanks, perhaps,

* Well he might be so sure, when he had the art to play them off, by his corrupted agent, and to make them all join to promote his views unknown to themselves; as is shewn in some of his preceding letters.

to his *pride*, more than to his *virtue:* that Lord M. moreover resolves to settle upon him a thousand pounds *per annum* on his nuptials. And to this, he will have it, his lordship is instigated more by motives of *justice*, than of *generosity;* as he must consider it was but an equivalent for an estate which he had got possession of, to which *his* (Mr. Lovelace's) mother had better pretensions. That his lordship also proposed to give him up either his seat in Hertfordshire, or that in Lancashire, at his own or at his wife's option, especially if I am the person. All which it will be in my power to see done, and proper settlements drawn, *before* I enter into any farther engagements with him; if I will have it so.'

He says, 'That I need not be under any solicitude as to *apparel:* all *immediate* occasions of that sort will be most cheerfully supplied by the ladies of his family: as my others shall, with the greatest pride and pleasure (if I allow him that honour) by himself.

'He assures me, that I shall govern him as I please, with regard to any thing in *his* power towards effecting a reconciliation with my friends:' a point he knows my heart is set upon.

'He is afraid, that the time will hardly allow of his procuring Miss Charlotte Montague's attendance upon me, at St. Alban's, as he had proposed she should; because, he understands, she keeps her chamber with a violent cold and sore throat. But both she and her sister, the first moment she is able to go abroad, shall visit me at my private lodgings; and introduce me to Lady Sarah and Lady Betty, or those ladies to me, as I shall choose; and accompany me to town, if I please; and stay as long in it with me as I shall think fit to stay there.

'Lord M. will also, at my own time, and in my own *manner*, (that is to say, either publicly or privately,) make me a visit. And, for his own part, when he has

seen me in safety, either in their protection, or in the privacy I prefer, he will leave me, and not attempt to visit me but by my own permission.

'He had thought once, he says, on hearing of his cousin Charlotte's indisposition, to have engaged his cousin Patty's attendance upon me, either in or about the neighbouring village, or at St. Alban's: but, he says, she is a low-spirited, timorous girl, and would but the more have perplexed us.'

So, my dear, the enterprise requires courage and high spirits, you see!—And indeed it does!—What am I about to do!

He himself, it is plain, thinks it necessary that I should be accompanied with one of my own sex.—He might, at least, have proposed the woman of one of the ladies of his family.—Lord bless me!—What am I about to do!—

After all, as far as I have gone, I know not but I may still recede: and, if I do, a mortal quarrel I suppose will ensue.—And what if it does?—Could there be any way to escape this Solmes, a breach with Lovelace might make way for the single life to take place, which I so much prefer: and then I would defy the sex. For I see nothing but trouble and vexation that they bring upon ours: and when once entered, one is obliged to go on with them, treading, with tender feet, upon thorns, and sharper thorns, to the end of a painful journey.

What to do I know not. The more I think, the more I am embarrassed!—And the stronger will be my doubts as the appointed time draws near.

But I will go down, and take a little turn in the garden; and deposit this, and his letters all but the two last, which I will enclose in my next, if I have opportunity to write another.

Mean time, my dear friend——But what can I desire you to pray for?—Adieu, then!—Let me only say—Adieu!—

LETTER XLV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

[*In answer to Letter* XLIII.]

Sunday Morning, April 9.

Do not think, my beloved friend, although you have given me in yours of yesterday a *severer* instance of what, nevertheless, I must call your *impartial* love, than ever yet I received from you, that I will be displeased with you for it. That would be to put myself into the inconvenient situation of royalty: that is to say, *out of the way* of ever being told of my faults; of ever mending them: and *in the way* of making the sincerest and warmest friendship useless to me.

And then how brightly, how nobly glows in your bosom the sacred flame of friendship; since it can make you ready to impute to the unhappy sufferer a *less degree* of warmth in *her own* cause, than *you* have for her, because she endeavours to divest herself of *self* so far as to leave others to the option which they have a right to make!—Ought I, my dear, to blame, ought I not rather to admire you for this ardor?

But nevertheless, lest you should think that there is any foundation for a surmise which (although it owe its rise to *your* friendship) would, if there *were*, leave *me* utterly inexcusable, I must, in justice to myself, declare, that I know not my own heart if I have any of that *latent* or *unowned inclination*, which you would impute to *any other but me*. Nor does the

important alternative sit lightly on my mind. And yet I must excuse your mother, were it but on this single consideration, that I could not presume to reckon upon *her* favour, as I could upon *her daughter's*, so as to make the claim of friendship upon *her*, to whom, as the mother of my dearest friend, a veneration is owing, which can hardly be compatible with that sweet familiarity which is one of the indispensable requisites of the sacred tie by which your heart and mine are bound in one.

What therefore I might expect from my *Anna Howe*, I *ought not* from her *mother;* for would it not be very strange, that a person of her experience should be reflected upon because she gave not up her own judgment, where the consequence of her doing so would be to embroil herself, as she apprehends, with a family she has lived well with, and in behalf of a child against her parents?—as she has moreover a daughter of her own:—a daughter too, give me leave to say, of whose vivacity and charming spirits she is more apprehensive than she need to be, because her truly maternal cares make her fear more from her *youth*, than she hopes from her *prudence;* which, nevertheless, she and all the world know to be *beyond* her years.

And here let me add, that whatever you may generously, and as the result of an ardent affection for your unhappy friend, urge on this head, in my behalf, or harshly against any one who may refuse me protection in the extraordinary circumstances I find myself in, I have some pleasure in being able to curb undue expectations upon my indulgent friends, whatever were to befal myself from those circumstances, for I should be extremely mortified, were I by my selfish forwardness to give occasion for such a check, as to be told, that I had encouraged an unreasonable hope, or, according to the phrase you mention, wished to take *a thorn*

out of my own foot, and to put into that of my friend. Nor should I be better pleased with myself, if, having been taught by my good Mrs. Norton, that the best of schools is *that of affliction*, I should rather learn impatience than the contrary, by the lessons I am obliged to get by heart in it; and if I should judge of the *merits of others*, as they were *kind to me;* and that at the expense of their own convenience or peace of mind. For is not this to suppose myself ever in the right; and all who do not act as I would have them act, perpetually in the wrong? In short, to make *my* sake *God*'s sake, in the sense of Mr. Solmes's pitiful plea to me?

How often, my dear, have you and I endeavoured to detect and censure this partial spirit in others?

But I know you do not always content yourself with saying what you think may *justly* be said; but, in order to shew the extent of a penetration which can go to the bottom of any subject, delight to say or to write all that *can* be *said* or *written*, or even *thought*, on the particular occasion; and this partly perhaps from being desirous [pardon me, my dear!] to be thought mistress of a sagacity that is aforehand with events. But who would wish to drain off or dry up a refreshing current, because it now-and-then puts us to some little inconvenience by its over-flowings? In other words, who would not allow for the liveliness of a spirit which for one painful sensibility gives an hundred pleasurable ones; and the *one* in consequence of the *other?*

But now I come to the two points in your letter, which most sensibly concern me: Thus you put them:

> 'Whether I choose not rather to go off [shocking words!] with one of my *own sex;* with my ANNA HOWE—than with one of the *other;* with Mr. LOVELACE?'

And if *not*,

'Whether I should not marry him as soon as possible?'

You know, my dear, my reasons for rejecting your proposal, and even for being earnest that you should not be *known* to be assisting to me in an enterprise in which a cruel necessity induced *me* to think of engaging; and for which *you* have not the same plea. At this rate, *well* might your mother be uneasy at our correspondence, not knowing to what inconveniencies it might subject her and you!—If *I* am hardly excusable to think of withdrawing from my *unkind* friends, what could *you* have to say for yourself, were you to abandon a mother so *indulgent?* Does she suspect that your fervent friendship may lead you to a *small* indiscretion? and does this suspicion offend you? And would you, in resentment, shew her and the world, that you can voluntarily rush into the *highest error* that any of our sex can be guilty of?

And is it worthy of your generosity [I ask you, my dear, is it?) to think of taking so undutiful a step, because you believe your mother would be glad to receive you again?

I do assure you, that were I to take this step myself, I would run all risks rather than you should accompany me in it. Have I, do you think, a desire to *double* and *treble* my own fault in the eye of the world? in the eye of that world which, cruelly as I am used, (not knowing all,) would not acquit *me?*

But, my dearest, kindest friend, let me tell you, that we will *neither* of us take such a step. The manner of putting your questions abundantly convinces me, that I ought not, in *your* opinion, to *attempt* it. You no doubt *intend* that I shall *so* take it; and I thank you for the equally polite and forcible conviction.

It is some satisfaction to me (taking the matter in

this light) that I had begun to waver before I received your last. And now I tell you, that it has absolutely determined me not to go off; at least not to-morrow.

If *you*, my dear, think *the issue of the alternative* (to use your own words) *sits so lightly upon my mind*, in short, that my *inclination* is *faulty;* the *world* would treat me much less scrupulously. When therefore you represent, *that all punctilio must be at an end the moment I am out of my father's house; and hint*, that I must submit it to Mr. Lovelace to judge *when* he can leave me with safety; that is to say, give *him* the option whether he will leave me, or not; who can bear these reflections, who can resolve to incur these inconveniencies, that has the question still in her own power to decide upon?

While I thought only of an escape from *this house* as an escape from *Mr. Solmes;* that already my reputation suffered by my confinement; and that it would be still in my own option either to marry Mr. Lovelace, or wholly to renounce him; bold as the step was, I thought, treated as I am treated, something was to be said in excuse of it—if not to the world, to *myself:* and to be *self-acquitted*, is a blessing to be preferred to the option of all the world. But, after I have censured most severely, as I have ever done, those giddy girls, who have in the same hour, as I may say, that they have fled from their chamber, presented themselves at the altar that is to witness to their undutiful rashness; after I have stipulated with Mr. Lovelace *for time*, and for *an ultimate option whether to accept or refuse him;* and for his *leaving me, as soon as I am in a place of safety* (which, as you observe, *he* must be the judge of); and after he has *signified to me his compliance with these terms;* so that I cannot, if I *would*, recall them, and suddenly marry;—you see, my dear, that I have nothing left me but to resolve *not* to go away with him!

But, how, on this revocation of my appointment, shall I be able to pacify him?

How!—Why assert the privilege of my sex!—Surely, on *this* side of the solemnity he has no *right* to be displeased. Besides, did I not reserve a power of receding, as I saw fit? To what purpose, as I asked in the case between your mother and you, has any body an option, if the making use of it shall give the refused a right to be disgusted?

Far, very far, would *those*, who, according to the old law, have a *right* of *absolving* or *confirming* a child's promise, be from ratifying *mine*, had it been ever *so solemn* a one.* But this was rather an *appointment* than a promise: and suppose it had been the latter;

* See *Numb.* xxx. Where it is declared, whose vows shall be binding, and whose not. The vows of a man, or of a widow, are there pronounced to be indispensable; because they are sole, and subject to no other domestic authority. But the vows of a single woman, and of a wife, if the father of the one, or the husband of the other, disallow of them as soon as they know them, are to be of no force.

A matter highly necessary to be known; by all young ladies especially, whose designing addressers too often endeavour to engage them by vows; and then plead conscience and honour to them to hold them down to the performance.

It cannot be amiss to recite the very words.

Ver. 3. *If a woman vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;*

4. *And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.*

5. *But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.*

The same in the case of a wife, as said above. See ver. 6, 7, 8, &c.—And all is thus solemnly closed:

Ver. 16. *These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.*

and that I had *not* reserved to myself a liberty of revoking it; was it to preclude *better* or *maturer* consideration?—If so, how unfit to be given!—how ungenerous to be insisted upon!—And how unfitter still to be kept!—Is there a man living who ought to be angry that a woman whom he hopes one day to call his, shall refuse to keep a rash promise, when, on the maturest deliberation, she is convinced that it *was* a rash one?

I resolve then, upon the whole, to stand this one trial of Wednesday next—or, perhaps, I should rather say, of Tuesday evening, if my father hold his purpose of endeavouring, in person, to make me *read*, or *hear* read, and then *sign*, the settlements.—*That*, *that* must be the greatest trial of all.

If I am compelled to sign them over-night—then (the Lord bless me!) must all I dread follow, as of course, on Wednesday. If I can prevail upon them by my prayers [perhaps I shall fall into fits; for the very first appearance of my father, after having been so long banished his presence, will greatly affect me—if, I say, I can prevail upon them by my prayers] to lay aside their views; or to suspend the day, if but for one week; if *not*, but for two or three days; still Wednesday will be a lighter day of trial. They will surely give me time to *consider:* to *argue* with myself. This will not be *promising*. As I have made no effort to get away, they have no reason to suspect me; so I may have an opportunity, in the last resort, to withdraw. Mrs. Norton is to be with me: she, although she should be chidden for it, will, in my extremity, plead for me. My aunt Hervey *may*, in such an extremity, join with her. Perhaps my mother may be brought over. I will kneel to each, one by one, to make a friend. Some of them have been afraid to see me, lest they should be moved in my favour: does

not this give me a reasonable hope that I *may* move them? My brother's counsel, heretofore given, to turn me out of doors to my evil destiny, may again be repeated, and may prevail; *then* shall I be in no *worse* case than *now*, as to the displeasure of my friends; and thus far *better*, that it will not be my fault that I seek another protection: which even *then* ought to be my cousin Morden's, rather than Mr. Lovelace's, or any other person's.

My heart, in short, misgives me less, when I resolve *this* way, than when I think of the *other:* and in so strong and involuntary a bias, the *heart* is, as I may say, *conscience*. And well cautions the wise man: 'Let the counsel of thine own heart stand; for there is no man more faithful to thee than it: for a man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen, that sit above in a high tower.' *

Forgive these indigested self-reasonings. I will close here: and instantly set about a letter of revocation to Mr. Lovelace; take it as he will. It will only be another trial of temper to *him*. To *me* of infinite importance. And has he not promised temper and acquiescence, on the supposition of a change in my mind?

LETTER XLVI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Sunday Morning, April 9.

Nobody it seems will go to church this day. No blessing to be expected perhaps upon views so worldly, and in some so cruel.

They have a mistrust that I have some device in my

* *Ecclus.* xxxvii. 13, 14.

head. Betty has been looking among my clothes. I found her, on coming up from depositing my letter to Lovelace (for I *have* written!) peering among them; for I had left the key in the lock. She coloured, and was confounded to be caught. But I only said, I should be accustomed to any sort of treatment in time. If she had her orders—those were enough for her.

She owned, in her confusion, that a motion had been made to abridge me of my airings; and the report *she* should make, would be of no disadvantage to me. One of my friends, she told me, urged in my behalf, That there was no need of laying me under greater restraint, since Mr. Lovelace's threatening to *rescue* me by violence, were I to have been carried to my uncle's, was a conviction that I had no design to go to him voluntarily; and that if I *had*, I should have made preparations of that kind *before now;* and, most probably, been detected in them.—*Hence*, it was also inferred, that there was no room to doubt, but I would at last comply. And, added the bold creature, if you don't intend to do so, your conduct, Miss, seems strange to me.—Only thus she reconciled it, that I had gone so far, I knew not how to come off *genteelly:* and she fancied I should, in *full congregation*, on Wednesday, give Mr. Solmes my hand. And then said the confident wench, as the learned Dr. Brand took his text last Sunday, *There will be joy in heaven*—

This is the substance of my letter to Mr. Lovelace:

'That I have reasons of the greatest consequence to *myself* (and which, when known, must satisfy *him*) to suspend, for the present, my intention of leaving my father's house: that I have hopes that matters may be brought to an happy conclusion, without taking a step, which nothing but the last necessity could justify: and that he may depend upon my promise, that I will die rather than consent to marry Mr. Solmes.'

And so, I am preparing myself to stand the shock of his exclamatory reply. But be that what it will, it cannot affect me so much, as the apprehensions of what may happen to me next Tuesday or Wednesday; for now those apprehensions engage my whole attention, and make me sick at the very heart.

Sunday, Four in the Afternoon.

My letter is not yet taken away—If he should not send for it, or take it, and come hither on my not meeting him to-morrow, in doubt of what may have befallen me, what shall I do! Why had I any concerns with this sex!—I, that was so happy till I knew this man!

I dined in the ivy summer-house. My request to do so, was complied with at the first word. To shew I meant nothing, I went again into the house with Betty, as soon as I had dined. I thought it was not amiss to ask this liberty; the weather seemed to be set in fine. Who knows what Tuesday or Wednesday may produce?

Sunday Evening, Seven o'clock.

There remains my letter still!—He is busied, I suppose, in his preparations for to-morrow. But then he has servants. Does the man think he is so *secure* of me, that having appointed, he need not give himself any further concern about me till the very moment? He knows how I am beset. He knows not what may happen. I *might* be ill, or still more closely watched or confined than before. The correspondence *might* be discovered. It *might* be necessary to vary the scheme. I *might* be forced into measures, which might entirely frustrate my purpose. I *might* have new doubts. I *might* suggest something more convenient, for any thing

he knew. What can the man mean, I wonder!—Yet it shall lie; for if he has it any time before the appointed hour, it will save me declaring to him personally my changed purpose, and the trouble of contending with him on that score. If he send for it at all, he will see by the date, that he might have had it in time; and if he be put to any inconvenience from shortness of notice, let him take it for his pains.

Sunday Night, Nine o'clock.

It is determined, it seems, to send for Mrs. Norton to be here on Tuesday to dinner; and she is to stay with me for a whole week.

So she is first to endeavour to persuade me to comply; and, when the violence is done, she is to comfort me, and try to reconcile me to my fate. They expect *fits* and *fetches*, Betty insolently tells me, and expostulations, and exclamations, *without number:* but every body will be prepared for them: and when it's over, it's over; and I shall be easy and pacified when I find I can't help it.

Monday Morn. April 10, Seven o'clock.

O my dear! there yet lies the letter, just as I left it!

Does he think he is so sure of me?—Perhaps he imagines that I *dare not* alter my purpose. I wish I had never known him! I begin now to see this rashness in the light every one else would have seen it in, had I been guilty of it. But what can I do, if he come to-day at the appointed time! If he receive not the letter, I must see him, or he will think something has befallen me; and certainly will come to the house. As certainly he will be insulted. And what, in that case, may be the consequence! Then I as good as

promised that I would take the first opportunity to see him, if I change my mind, and to give him my reasons for it. I have no doubt but he will be out of humour upon it: but better, if we meet, that *he* go away dissatisfied with *me*, than that *I* should go away dissatisfied with *myself*.

Yet, short as the time is, he may still perhaps send, and get the letter. Something may have happened to prevent him, which when known will excuse him.

After I have disappointed him more than once before, on a requested *interview* only, it is impossible he should not have *curiosity* at least, to know if something has not happened; and whether my mind hold or not in this more *important case*. And yet, as I rashly confirmed my resolution by a second letter, I begin now to doubt it.

Nine o'clock.

My cousin Dolly Hervey slid the enclosed letter into my hand, as I passed by her, coming out of the garden.

DEAREST MADAM,

I have got intelligence from one who pretends to know every thing, that you must be married on Wednesday morning to Mr. Solmes. Perhaps, however, she says this only to vex me; for it is that saucy creature Betty Barnes. A license is got, as she says: and so far she went as to tell me (bidding me say nothing, but she knew I would) that Mr. Brand is to marry you. For Dr. Lewen, I hear, refuses, unless your consent can be obtained; and they have heard that he does not approve of their proceedings against

you. Mr. Brand, I am told, is to have his fortune made by uncle Harlowe and among them.

You will know better than I what to make of all these matters; for sometimes I think Betty tells me things as if I should not tell you, and yet expects that I will.* For there is great whispering between Miss Harlowe and her; and I have observed that when their whispering is over, Betty comes and tells me something by way of secret. She and all the world know how much I love you: and so I would *have* them. It is an honour to me to love a young lady who is and ever was an honour to all her family, let them say what they will.

But from a more certain authority than Betty's I can assure you (but I must beg of you to burn this letter) that you are to be searched once more for letters, and for pen and ink; for they know you write. Something they pretend to have come at from one of Mr. Lovelace's servants, which they hope to make something of. I know not for certain what it is. He must be a very vile and wicked man who would boast of a lady's favour to him, and reveal secrets. But Mr. Lovelace, I dare say, is too much of a gentleman to be guilty of such ingratitude.

Then they have a notion, from that false Betty I believe, that you intend to take something to make yourself sick; and so they will search for phials and powders, and such like.

If nothing shall be found that will increase their

* It is easy for such of the readers as have been attentive to Mr. Lovelace's manner of working, to suppose, from this hint of Miss Hervey's, that he had instructed his double-faced agent to put his sweet-heart Betty upon alarming Miss Hervey, in hopes she would alarm her beloved cousin, (as we see she does,) in order to keep her steady to her appointment with him.

suspicions, you are to be used more kindly by your papa when you appear before them all, than he of late has used you.

Yet, sick or well, alas! my dear cousin! you must be married. But your husband is to go home every night without you, till you are reconciled to him. And so illness can be no pretence to save you.

They are sure you will make a good wife. So would not I, unless I liked my husband. And Mr. Solmes is always telling them how he will purchase your love by rich presents.—A sycophant man!—I wish he and Betty Barnes were to come together; and he would beat her every day.

After what I told you, I need not advise you to secure every thing you would not have seen.

Once more let me beg that you will burn this letter; and, pray, dearest Madam, do not take any thing that may prejudice your health: for that will not do. I am

Your truly loving cousin,

D. H.

When I first read my cousin's letter, I was half inclined to resume my former intention; especially as my countermanding letter was not taken away; and as my heart ached at the thoughts of the conflict I must expect to have with him on my refusal. For see him for a few moments I doubt I must, lest he should take some rash resolutions; especially as he has reason to expect I will see him. But here your words, *that all punctilio is at an end the moment I am out of my father's house*, added to the still more cogent considerations of duty and reputation, determined me once more against taking the rash step. And it will be very hard (although no seasonable fainting, or wished-for fit, should stand my

friend) if I cannot gain one month, or fortnight, or week. And I have still more hopes that I shall prevail for some delay, from my cousin's intimation that the good Dr. Lewen refuses to give his assistance to their projects, if they have not my consent, and thinks me cruelly used: since, without taking notice that I am apprized of this, I can plead a scruple of conscience, and insist upon having that worthy divine's opinion upon it: in which, enforced as I shall enforce it, my mother will surely second me: my aunt Hervey, and Mrs. Norton, will support *her:* the suspension must follow: and I can but get away afterwards.

But, if they *will* compel me: if they *will* give me no time: if nobody *will* be moved: if it be resolved that the ceremony should be read over my constrained hand—why then—Alas! What then!—I can but—But what? O my dear! this Solmes shall never have my vows I am resolved! and I will say nothing but no, as long as I shall be able to speak. And who will presume to look upon such an act of violence as a marriage?—It is impossible, surely, that a father and mother can see such a dreadful compulsion offered to their child—but if mine should withdraw, and leave the task to my brother and sister, they will have no mercy.

I am grieved to be driven to have recourse to the following artifices.

I have given them a clue, by the feather of a pen sticking out, where they will find such of my hidden stories, as I intend they shall find.

Two or three little essays I have left easy to be seen, of my own writing.

About a dozen lines also of a letter begun to you, in which I express my hopes, (although I say that appearances are against me,) and that my friends will relent.

They know from your mother, by my uncle Antony, that, some how or other, I now and then get a letter to you. In this piece of a letter I declare renewedly my firm resolution to give up the man so obnoxious to my family, on their releasing me from the address of the other.

Near the essays, I have left the copy of my letter to Lady Drayton;* which affording arguments suitable to my case, may chance (thus accidentally to be fallen upon) to incline them to favour me.

I have reserves of pens and ink, you may believe; and one or two in the ivy summer-house; with which I shall amuse myself, in order to lighten, if possible, those apprehensions which more and more affect me, as Wednesday, the day of trial, approaches.

LETTER XLVII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

Ivy Summer-house, Eleven o'clock.

He has not yet got my letter: and while I was contriving here how to send my officious gaoleress from me, that I might have time for the intended interview, and had hit upon an expedient, which I believe would have done, came my aunt, and furnished me with a much better. She saw my little table covered, preparative to my solitary dinner; and hoped, she told me, that this would be the last day that my friends would be deprived of my company at table.

You may believe, my dear, that the thoughts of meeting Mr. Lovelace, for fear of being discovered,

* See Letters XIII. and XIV.

together with the contents of my cousin Dolly's letter, gave me great and visible emotions. She took notice of them—Why these sighs, why these heavings here? said she, patting my neck—O my dear Niece, who would have thought so much natural sweetness could be so very unpersuadable?

I could not answer her, and she proceeded—I am come, I doubt, upon a very unwelcome errand. Some things that have been told us yesterday, which came from the mouth of one of the most desperate and insolent men in the world, convince your father, and all of us, that you still find means to write out of the house. Mr. Lovelace knows every thing that is done here; and that as soon as done; and great mischief is apprehended from him, which you are as much concerned as any body to prevent. Your mother has also some apprehensions concerning yourself, which yet she hopes are groundless; but, however, cannot be easy, nor will be permitted to be easy, if she would, unless (while you remain here in the garden, or in this summer-house) you give her the opportunity once more of looking into your closet, your cabinet, and drawers. It will be the better taken, if you give me cheerfully your keys. I hope, my dear, you won't dispute it. Your desire of dining in this place was the more readily complied with for the sake of such an opportunity.

I thought myself very lucky to be so well prepared by my cousin Dolly's means for this search: but yet I artfully made some scruples, and not a few complaints of this treatment: after which, I not only gave her the keys of all, but even officiously emptied my pockets before her, and invited her to put her fingers in my stays, that she might be sure I had no papers there.

This highly obliged her; and she said, she would

represent my cheerful compliance as it deserved, *let my brother and sister say what they would.* My mother in particular, she was sure, would rejoice at the opportunity given her to obviate, as she doubted not would be the case, some suspicions that were raised against me.

She then hinted, That there were methods taken to come at all Mr. Lovelace's secrets, and even, from his careless communicativeness, at some of *mine;* it being, she said, his custom, boastingly to prate to his very servants of his intentions, in particular cases. She added, that deep as he was thought to be, my brother was as deep as he, and fairly too hard for him at his own weapons —as one day it would be found.

I knew not, I said, the meaning of these dark hints. I thought the cunning she hinted at, on *both* sides, called rather for contempt than applause. I myself might have been put upon artifices which my heart disdained to practise, had I given way to the *resentment*, which, I was bold to say, was much more justifiable than the actions that occasioned it: that it was evident to me, from what she had said, that their present suspicions of me were partly owing to this supposed superior cunning of my brother, and partly to the consciousness that the usage I met with might naturally produce a reason for such suspicions: that it was very unhappy for me to be made the butt of my brother's wit: that it would have been more to his praise to have aimed at shewing a kind heart than a cunning head: that, nevertheless, I wished he knew *himself* as well as I imagined *I* knew him; and he would then have less conceit of his abilities: which abilities would, in my opinion, be less thought of, if his power to do ill offices were not much greater than they.

I was vexed. I could not help making this reflec-

tion. The dupe the other, too probably, makes of him, through his own spy, deserved it. But I so little approve of this low art in either, that were I but tolerably used, the vileness of that man, that Joseph Leman, should be inquired into.

She was sorry, she said, to find that I thought so disparagingly of my brother. He was a young man both of learning and parts.

Learning enough, I said, to make him vain of it among us women: but not of *parts* sufficient to make his learning valuable either to himself or to any body else.

She wished, indeed, that he had more good nature: but she feared that I had too great an opinion of somebody else, to think so well of my brother as a sister ought: since, between the two, there was a sort of rivalry, as to abilities, that made them hate one another.

Rivalry! Madam, said I.—If that be the case, or whether it be or not, I wish they both understood, better than either of them seems to do, what it becomes gentlemen, and men of liberal education, to be, and to do.—Neither of them, then, would glory in what they ought to be ashamed of.

But waving this subject, it was not impossible, I said, that they might find a little of my writing, and a pen or two, and a little ink, [hated art!—or rather, hateful the necessity for it!] as I was not permitted to go up to put them out of the way: but if they did, I must be contented. And I assured her, that, take what time they pleased, I would not go in to disturb them, but would be either in or near the garden, in this summer-house, or in the cedar one, or about my poultry-yard, or near the great cascade, till I was ordered to return to my prison. With like cunning I said, that I supposed the unkind search would not be

made till the servants had dined; because I doubted not that the pert Betty Barnes, who knew all the corners of my apartment and closet, would be employed in it.

She hoped, she said, that nothing could be found that would give a handle against me: for, she would assure me, the motives to the search, on my mother's part especially, were, that she hoped to find reason rather to acquit than to blame me; and that my father might be induced to see me to-morrow night, or Wednesday morning, with temper: with *tenderness*, I should rather say, said she; for he is resolved so to do, if no new offence be given.

Ah! Madam, said I—

Why that Ah! Madam, and shaking your head so significantly?

I wish, Madam, that I may not have more reason to dread my father's continued displeasure, than to hope for his returning tenderness.

You don't *know*, my dear!—Things may take a turn—things may not be so bad as you fear—

Dearest Madam, have you any consolation to give me?—

Why, my dear, it is possible, that *you* may be more compliable than you have been.

Why raised you my hopes, Madam?—Don't let me think my dear aunt Hervey cruel to a niece who truly honours her.

I may tell you more perhaps, said she (but in confidence, in absolute confidence) if the inquiry within came out in your favour. Do you know of any thing above that can be found to your disadvantage?—

Some papers they will find, I doubt: but I must take consequences. My brother and sister will be at hand with their good-natured constructions. I am made desperate, and care not what is found.

I hope, I *earnestly* hope, said she, that nothing can be found that will impeach your discretion; and then—but I may say too much—

And away she went, having added to my perplexity.

But I now can think of nothing but this interview.—Would to Heaven it were over!—To meet to quarrel—but, let him take what measures he will, I will not stay a *moment* with him, if he be not quite calm and resigned.

Don't you see how crooked some of my lines are? Don't you see how some of the letters stagger more than others?—That is when this interview is more in my head than my subject.

But, after all, should I, *ought* I to meet him? How have I taken it for granted that I should!—I wish there were time to take your advice. Yet you are so loth to speak *quite* out—but *that* I owe, as you own, to the difficulty of my situation.

I should have mentioned, that in the course of this conversation I besought my aunt to stand my friend, and to put in a word for me on my approaching trial; and to endeavour to procure me *time for consideration*, if I could obtain nothing else.

She told me, that, after the ceremony was performed, [*odious confirmation of a hint in my cousin Dolly's letter!*] I should have what time I pleased to reconcile myself to my lot before cohabitation.

This put me out of all patience.

She requested of me in *her* turn, she said, that I would resolve to meet them all with cheerful duty, and with a spirit of absolute acquiescence. It was in my power to make them all happy. And how joyful would it be to her, she said, to see my father, my mother, my uncles, my brother, my sister, all embracing me with raptures, and folding me in turns to their fond

hearts, and congratulating each other on their restored happiness! Her own joy, she said, would probably make her motionless and speechless for a time: and for her Dolly—the poor girl, who had suffered in the esteem of some, for her *grateful* attachment to me, would have every body love her again.

Will you doubt, my dear, that my next trial will be the most affecting that I have yet had?

My aunt set forth all this in so strong a light, and I was so particularly touched on my cousin Dolly's account, that, impatient as I was just before, I was greatly moved: yet could only shew, by my sighs and my tears, how desirable such an event would be to me, could it be brought about upon conditions with which it was possible for me to comply.

Here comes Betty Barnes with my dinner—

The wench is gone. The time of meeting is at hand. O that he may not come!—But should I, or should I not meet him?—How I question, without possibility of a timely answer!

Betty, according to my leading hint to my aunt, boasted to me, that she was to be *employed*, as she called it, after she had eat her own dinner.

She should be sorry, she told me, to have me found out. Yet 'twould be all for my good. I should have it in my power to be forgiven for all at once, before Wednesday night. The confident creature then, to stifle a laugh, put a corner of her apron in her mouth, and went to the door: and on her return to take away, as I angrily bid her, she begged my excuse—but—but—and then the saucy creature laughed again, she could not help it, to think how I had drawn myself in by my summer-house dinnering, since it had

given so fine an opportunity, by way of surprise, to look into all my private hoards. She thought *something was in the wind*, when my brother came into my dining here so readily. Her young master was too hard for every body. 'Squire Lovelace himself was nothing at all at a quick thought to her young master.

My aunt mentioned Mr. Lovelace's boasting behaviour to *his* servants: perhaps *he* may be so mean. But as to my brother, he always took a pride in making himself appear to be a man of parts and learning to *our* servants. *Pride* and *meanness*, I have often thought, are as nearly allied, and as close borderers upon each other, as the poet tells us *wit* and *madness* are.

But why do I trouble you (and myself, at such a crisis) with these impertinences?—Yet I would forget, if I could, the nearest evil, the interview; because, my apprehensions increasing as the hour is at hand, I should, were my intention to be engrossed by them, be unfit to see him, if he does come: and then he will have too much advantage over me, as he will have seeming reason to reproach me with change of resolution.

The *upbraider*, you know, my dear, is in some sense a superior; while the *upbraided*, if with reason upbraided, must make a figure as spiritless as conscious.

I know that this wretch will, if he *can*, be his own judge, and *mine* too. But the latter he shall not be.

I dare say, we shall be all to pieces. But I don't care for that. It would be hard, if I, who have held it out so sturdily to my father and uncles, should not —but he is at the garden-door—

I was mistaken!—How many noises *unlike*, be made *like* to what one fears!—Why flutters the fool so!—

I will hasten to deposit this. Then I will, for the last time, go to the usual place, in hopes to find that he has got my letter. If he *has*, I will not meet him. If he has *not*, I will take it back, and shew him what I have written. That will break the ice, as I may say, and save me much circumlocution and reasoning: and a steady adherence to that my written mind is all that will be necessary.—The interview must be as short as possible; for should it be discovered, it would furnish a new and strong pretence for the intended evil of Wednesday next.

Perhaps I shall not be able to write again one while. Perhaps not till I am the miserable property of that Solmes!—But that shall never, never be, while I have my senses.

If your servant find nothing from me by Wednesday morning, you may then conclude that I can neither write to you, nor receive your favours.

In that case, pity and pray for me, my beloved friend; and continue to me that place in your affection, which is the pride of my life, and the only comfort left to

Your
Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER XLVIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

St. Alban's, Tuesday Morn. past One.

O My Dearest Friend!

After what I had resolved upon, as by my former, what shall I write? what *can* I? with what consciousness, even by *letter*, do I approach you?—You will soon hear (if already you have not heard from the mouth of common fame) that your Clarissa Harlowe is gone off with a man!

I am busying myself to give you the particulars at large. The whole twenty-four hours of each day (to begin the moment I can fix) shall be employed in it till it is finished: every one of the hours, I mean, that will be spared me by this interrupting man, to whom I have made myself so foolishly accountable for too many of them. Rest is departed from me. I have no call for that: and that has no balm for the wounds of my mind. So you'll have all those hours without interruption till the account is ended.

But will you receive, shall you be *permitted* to receive my letters, after what I have done?

O my dearest friend!—But I must make the best of it.

I hope that will not be very bad! yet am I convinced that I did a rash and inexcusable thing in meeting him; and all his tenderness, all his vows, cannot pacify my inward reproaches on that account.

The bearer comes to you, my dear, for the little parcel of linen which I sent you with far better and more agreeable hopes.

Send not my letters. Send the linen only: except

you will favour me with one line, to tell me you love me still; and that you will suspend your censures till you have the whole before you. I am the readier to send thus early, because if you have deposited any thing for me, you may cause it to be taken back, or withhold any thing you had but intended to send.

Adieu, my dearest friend!—I beseech you to love me still—But alas! what will your mother say?—what will mine?—what my other relations?—and what my dear Mrs. Norton?—and how will my brother and sister triumph!

I cannot at present tell you how, or where, you can direct to me. For very early shall I leave this place; harassed and fatigued to death. But, when I can do nothing else, constant use has made me able to write. Long, very long, has that been all my amusement and pleasure: yet could not *that* have been such to me, had I not had *you*, my best beloved friend, to write to. Once more adieu. Pity and pray for

Your
CL. HARLOWE.

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Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London & Bungay.

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